References to Montaigne's Essays are so familiar that we never realize how long a time has elapsed since any translator has gone directly to the original. It is no less than two hundred and seventy-five years since Charles Cotton, the same man who finished Izaak Walton's "Compleat Angler," established his fame even more securely by superseding with his translation the one that John Florio had made in 1603. All recent editions have been merely reworkings of Cotton and smack of the seventeenth century. Only those who have puzzled their way through Montaigne's quaint French are aware how entirely inadequate Florio and Cotton are as interpreters either of his thought or of his style.

It is therefore with considerable satisfaction that we now present the first modern translation of Montaigne's Essays. Mr. George B. Ives, who is responsible for it, became interested in the subject when he annotated the text of Florio for the great Riverside Press edition designed by Bruce Rogers. He has thus devoted years of tireless effort to this new version, which disregards both its predecessors and is based upon the latest French editions of the original. Throughout this time he has had the assistance and encouragement of Miss Grace Norton, the no less distinguished sister of the distinguished Charles Eliot Norton, and a student of Montaigne favorably known both at home and in France. Miss Norton has provided suggestive introductions to the several chapters.

The Ives Montaigne will become a treasure, not only to those familiar with Florio or Cotton, who will here find their author in his own habit as he lived, but to a larger circle of readers, who can now have unobstructed access to the riches stowed away in these pages. For Montaigne is, beyond doubt, one of the few world classics. He stands in line with Euripides, Sophocles, Virgil, Dante, Shakspere, Milton, and Goethe. "His essays," says Andrew Lang, "are among the few works that really and literally make life more opulent with accumulated experience, criticism, reflection, humour. He gives of his rich nature, his lavish exuberance of character, out of that fresh and puissant century to this rather weary one. We all come to him, late indeed, but at last, and rest in his panelled library."

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THE ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE

VOLUME I

LONDON : HUMPHREY MILFORD
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

THE ESSAYS OF Montaigne

TRANSLATED BY GEORGE B. IVES

INTRODUCTIONS BY GRACE NORTON

VOLUME I

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TO

GRACE NORTON

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PREFACE

I

THERE have been two translations of Montaigne's Essays: that of John Florio, first published in 1603, and that of Charles Cotton, about 1670. The Florio translation was reissued in 1613 and 1632, but no other edition of it appeared until late in the nineteenth century. Within the past forty or fifty years it has been reprinted a number of times, but always without modification of the language.

The Cotton translation, on the other hand, has been "edited" by various hands, notably by William Hazlitt and O. W. Wight, and more recently by William Carew Hazlitt, by all of whom it has been considerably changed to suit their conceptions of Montaigne's meaning.

It was while assisting in the production of the Riverside Press limited edition, in folio, of the Florio translation, some twenty-odd years ago, that the present translator became convinced of its entire inadequacy, in many places, as a faithful interpretation of Montaigne's thought, and of its failure to reproduce what may, for lack of a better word, be called the essayist's style.

"Florio, the first English translator and the one of late most frequently reprinted, has a freedom and fluency that is often called 'Elizabethan'; but it is a fatal freedom and fluency for a translator; and it has little of Elizabethan weight and fullness of meaning; his abundance is constantly redundance; he has a tiresome use of clumsy compounds and is fond of useless synonyms, while with Montaigne one word is seldom the 'synonym' of another; each added word is an added thought. To illustrate this fully would take too

much space, but a fair example may be found toward the close of the third chapter of the first Book, where in one sentence, that about Diomedon, Florio inserts the words 'ruthless,' 'exemplar,' 'cruelly,' 'bloody,' 'I say,' 'earnestly,' 'revenge'; translates *faict* by 'success' instead of 'action,' making the sense unintelligible; translates *paisable* by 'plausible' (probably a misprint, but one that Mr. Henry Morley, as editor, accepts); and translates *descouvrir* (here meaning 'to lay bare') by 'exasperate,' again obscuring the meaning. The character — the quality — of the writing is thus changed throughout. . . . The passage, a part of which was just quoted above in the original, Florio translates as follows: 'All this galiemafry which I huddle up here is but a register of my live-essayes, which in regard of the internal health are sufficiently exemplary to take the instruction against the hair.' It could hardly be guessed that Montaigne's meaning, paraphrased, is that the reader may profit by the author's example if he reverse it." [1]

The Cotton translation, while in some respects much more faithful to the original, is marred by not infrequent, unexplained omissions, generally of obscure or puzzling passages.

For ten years following the publication of the Riverside Florio, the need, or desirability, of a new translation was always present at the back of the present writer's mind, coupled with what seemed a hopeless ambition to undertake it. But finally, some twelve years ago, at the suggestion of Miss Grace Norton of Cambridge, who has been well known for many years, in France no less favorably than at home, as a devoted student of Montaigne, he set out upon the enterprise which is at last approaching completion.

It must be said that the work was done throughout with the continued unfailing encouragement and assistance of Miss Norton, without which it could hardly have been carried to an end. Every page of the first draft of the man-

[1] Grace Norton, *Studies in Montaigne* (1904), p. 256, note.

uscript was read by her, and the rendering of many passages is due to mutual discussion. While it is in no sense such a translation as she herself would have made had conditions permitted, whatever merit it may possess is due chiefly to her advice. Moreover, the value of her learned and suggestive introductions to the several Essays can hardly be exaggerated.

II

The first edition of the Essays was published in 1580 and included only the first two books. The second, in 1582, contained some few slight, though not unimportant, additions; the third edition (1587) was practically a reprint of the second. The third book first appeared in 1588, in an edition called on the title-page the fifth, although no fourth has ever been discovered. In addition to the third book, this edition contained very considerable and important additions to, and changes in, the first two. This was the last edition published in Montaigne's lifetime. He died in 1592.

In 1595 appeared the first posthumous edition, which contained additions even more numerous and significant, to the third book as well as to the others. This edition was the one used by both Florio and Cotton as the basis of their translations, and it has been reprinted, in French, innumerable times. The question of the authorship of, or responsibility for, the changes embodied therein aroused no special interest until the discovery, late in the eighteenth century, in a convent near Bordeaux, of a copy of the edition of 1588, which Montaigne had evidently used in preparing for a new edition. The title-page has been changed by substituting "sixth edition" for "fifth edition," and adding the motto, "Vires atque eundo"; on the back of the title-page is a list of directions to the printer, and on every page of the volume are interlineations and marginal additions, erasures, substitutions, and re-writings, which, in many cases,

leave almost no white paper visible. The volume is not in the original binding, and there are places where a careless binder's knife has trimmed the page so closely as to cut off some of the written words, thus leaving something to conjecture.

The stupendous task of transcribing these manuscript additions was duly accomplished, with the result that a very large majority of them are found to be included in the posthumous edition of 1595. But that edition contains an appreciable number of other additions, together with some modifications of the manuscript emendations on the Bordeaux copy. It has been conjectured that these may have been written on loose or detached sheets, which became separated from the volume, or that they were made upon still another copy of the 1588 edition, which has never been found. But some doubt has been aroused by evidence that Montaigne's *fille d'alliance*, Mademoiselle de Jars de Gournay,[1] had a hand in some of them; so that it is the general consensus of opinion at this day that the Bordeaux copy represents the most authentic version available of Montaigne's proposed revision; and the Bordeaux municipality has adopted it as the basis of its recently published sumptuous edition of the Essays, known as the "Édition Municipale." This text, therefore, has been used in the present translation; but any variations from the edition of 1595, other than mere verbal ones, are given in the notes, where the term "Édition Municipale" is used, for brevity's sake, instead of "Bordeaux copy of 1588," except where the use of the latter phrase is made necessary for the sake of clearness. The problem of paragraphing has been one of considerable difficulty, for in none of the early editions of the Essays was there any division into paragraphs at all. In

[1] In 1635, she published an edition of the Essays, with a very long introduction signed by herself. She is referred to by Montaigne in affectionate and eulogistic terms near the end of chapter 17 of Book II. The term *fille d'alliance* did not, in this case, indicate any kinship, or even an adoption, properly speaking. Her introduction to her edition of 1635 is dithyrambic in praise of the Essays.

attempting to solve the problem, the constant aim has been to assist the reader.

In making additions to his text from one edition to another, Montaigne very often failed to fit them into place by the use of apt transitional words, so that the reader is often confused by the introduction of an apparently irrelevant passage, followed without warning by an abrupt recurrence to the line of thought interrupted by the interpolation. To avoid this disadvantage, the system has been adopted of indicating the different texts by the use of the letters (*a*), (*b*), and (*c*): (*a*) means that what follows is found in the edition of 1580; (*b*), an addition of 1588 in the first two books, or, in the case of the third book, the original text; and (*c*), an addition of 1595, that is to say, of the Édition Municipale. There are so few of the Essays (only five or six) which *begin* with an addition, that it may be assumed that the opening sentences are as they appeared in the first edition unless there is a note to the contrary.

The foot-notes are of four classes. (1) Translations of the passages quoted by Montaigne, chiefly from the Latin. These are entirely new and have been made specially for this edition. The attempt has been made to fit them into the context, in accordance with Montaigne's manifest purpose. "It is worth while," says Miss Norton, "to give this hint to the reader with regard to Montaigne's quotations from the ancient poets. They are always as accurate as is needful, but not infrequently the essayist makes such use of them as disguises or even alters their original significance. He expresses by the words of another his own different thought. Those who trace these quotations to their source find an unlooked-for pleasure in discovering the skill with which Montaigne adorned his pages with them, in accordance with the fashion of the time. He repeatedly takes notice himself of the multitude of his quotations, sometimes with open satisfaction in their noble birth and in their interpretive nature, sometimes with amused recognition of their easy multiplication."

(2) Citations of the authorities from whom Montaigne derived the facts and anecdotes and theories set forth in the text; and of the passages, chiefly from classical authors, which seem to have influenced his ideas and opinions in one way or another. Annotation of the Essays in this sense was first undertaken by Peter Coste, who was responsible for five editions in French in the first half of the eighteenth century. His work was very far from complete and his citations left much to be desired in the way of accuracy, but they have been generally accepted by editors of Cotton's translation — one must believe, without a serious attempt to verify them. Later French editors have revised and amplified Coste's work to some extent, but it remained for M. Pierre Villey, in his Notes to the Édition Municipale, to carry the work of annotation to a point that can hardly be surpassed. M. Villey had already published, under the most severe handicap imaginable, — that of total blindness, — two works of vast labor and erudition: *Les Sources et l'Évolution des Essais*, in two volumes, and *Livres de l'Histoire Moderne utilisés par Montaigne*. It is in the Notes based upon the second of these works, that he has carried the annotation of the Essays into a new field. The present translator has drawn rather freely upon these references to Montaigne's *modern* sources; and in this respect the work differs from all previous editions of the Essays in English.

(3) The original text of obscure or doubtful words or sentences, and of passages with which some liberty has been taken in the way of paraphrase or a free rendering, so that the reader may, if he choose, translate for himself.

(4) Cross-references to other passages in the Essays with which comparison may, for one reason or another, be worth while. The examples given in the notes are merely illustrative; it would have been possible to add largely to their number.

An occasional reference to the variant readings of the Bordeaux copy will give some idea of Montaigne's method of revision, and of the phases through which his thought

was wont to pass. It would be quite impossible within reasonable limits to offer anything more than a very few suggestive examples.

The writer is deeply indebted to Mrs. Elizabeth Gilpatrick Stewart and Miss Charlotte Heath of the Harvard University Press for their faithful and most helpful work on the proofs, and to his friend and former associate, Lanius D. Evans of the Riverside Press, for reading the proofs in page form, correcting many errors, and making many suggestions of great importance. As the work of translating and preparing for the press has lasted so many years, it has been almost impossible to preserve entire consistency in such matters as the method of citing authorities and of printing quoted passages. Such inconsistencies as may be found are not of a sort likely to mislead, or even, perhaps, to attract the attention of anybody but a printer.

George B. Ives.

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ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE

THE FIRST BOOK

TO THE READER

THIS is an honest book, reader. It gives you to know, at the outset, that I have proposed to myself only an intimate and private end; I have not considered what would be serviceable for you or for my renown; my powers are not equal to such a design. I have devoted these pages to the particular pleasure of my kinsmen and friends; to the end that, when they have lost me (which they must do ere long), they may find herein some touches of my qualities and moods, and that, by this means, they may cherish more completely and more vividly the knowledge they have had of me. Had I purposed to seek public favour, I should have better adorned myself, and presented myself in a studied attitude. I desire to be seen in my simple, natural, everyday guise, without effort and artifice; for it is my own self that I portray. My imperfections will be seen herein to the life, and my personal nature,[1] so far as respect for the public has permitted this. I assure you that, had I been living among those nations which are said still to dwell under the benign license of the primal laws of nature, I should very readily have painted myself quite completely, and quite naked. Since, reader, I am thus, myself, the subject of my book, it is not reasonable that you should employ your leisure on so trivial and empty a matter.

So, farewell. From Montaigne, this first March, 1580.[2]

[1] *Ma forme naifve.*

[2] Other dates are affixed to different editions.

CHAPTER I

BY DIVERS MEANS A LIKE END IS ATTAINED

The earlier Essays of Montaigne, written before 1580, — especially those of the first book, — are much less interesting than the later ones; they are greatly inferior in substance and in form. Many of them, indeed, do not deserve the name of Essays, a title subsequently invented by Montaigne: they are only what had been called *leçons* by his literary precursors — short compilations on one or another subject, with little or no addition of original thought, and demanding no sustained effort on the part of the author or the reader.

That Montaigne placed this Essay at the opening of his volume does not indicate necessarily that it was the first he composed (some of those that follow are unquestionably earlier in date): its position may be due to a different cause. In its first form when published in 1580, this Essay was scarcely more than half as long as it became later; it concluded with the thought: "Truly man is a marvellously volatile, various, and wavering creature." And another expression of this idea — which was a dominant conception in his mind at the time of his first making himself known to the public — is found at the conclusion of the last Essay of the edition of 1580 (Book II, chapter 37): *C'est la plus générale forme que nature ait suivy que la variété.* This theme runs as a *Leit-motif* through the two books: and it is a not improbable hypothesis, suggested by M. Villey, that he intentionally opened and closed their pages with it.

It was perhaps ten years later that Montaigne returned to this Essay, preparing it for a new edition, and he inserted in the middle of it a personal sentence regarding his own tendency toward *la miséricorde et le pardon*, indicating by this personal touch confidence in his public, given him by the character of the reception of the Essays on their first appearance.

And this, the first expression in the Essays of Montaigne's own nature, should not be passed over lightly. By this time — 1588 — he had seen much of the world and of the conditions of his own country. He had spent a year in Italy, he had been for four years mayor of Bordeaux, he was in relation with the chief personages of the day, and it is probable that he had served in the royalist army. The effect of all this experience of life and men had caused him to recognize that, in contrast to the pervading ferocity of the times, he had *une merveilleuse lascheté vers la miséricorde et le pardon.* The word *lascheté* is significant. It did not have in Montaigne's mouth at all the modern sense of a lack of courage, but it did have the meaning of a lack of vigor, a certain *mollesse* of nature. He had read in Seneca's *De Clementia* that "all good men will manifest clemency and gentleness, but they will avoid pity [*misericordia*], for it is the weakness of a small soul giving way at the sight of

other's ills." It is not in praise of himself that Montaigne speaks of this quality in himself; it is only one of the touches of that *Selbst-Porträt* which he painted in the Essays, and in painting it, depicted human nature.

This apparent reminiscence of Seneca is only the first of hundreds. The Essays are more or less permeated throughout by his thoughts. In the earlier ones Montaigne repeatedly expresses his deep admiration for him personally and for his writings. Plutarch and Seneca, he says in the Essay "Of Books," are the books *qui me servent plus ordinairement.* Of all the works of Seneca, he best likes his Letters. Later, his admiration diminishes; he finds in him a certain artificiality, and comparing him (for a second time) to Plutarch, he says that the one touches more the reader's *esprit*, the other his *entendement*, a phrase difficult of translation.

THE most usual way to soften the hearts of those we have offended, when, having vengeance in their hand, they hold us at their mercy, is to move them (*c*) by submission (*a*) to commiseration and pity; defiance, courage, and resolution — means altogether different — have sometimes served the same purpose. Edward, Prince of Wales,[1] who so long governed our Guienne, a personage whose qualities and whose fortune show many notable characteristics of greatness, having been much harmed by the Limousins and having taken their city by force, could not be stayed by the outcries of the people and of the women and children given over to slaughter, crying for mercy and throwing themselves at his feet; until, as he went on through the city, he became aware of three French gentlemen who, with incredible valour, withstood alone the power of his victorious army. The sight of such notable courage and the respect that it aroused primarily blunted the edge of his wrath, and beginning with those three, he shewed mercy to all the other inhabitants of the city.[2] Scanderbeg, Prince of Epirus,[3] pursuing one of his own soldiers, to put him to death, this soldier, having tried by every sort

[1] The "Black Prince," son of Edward III. See Froissart, ed. of 1559, I, 289.

[2] Froissart, on the contrary, says that he showed mercy *only* to the three gentlemen.

[3] Scanderbeg [Iskander Beg, *i. e.*, Prince Alexander] was an Albanian hero (1404–1466). Montaigne probably had in mind a passage in a work of Paulus Jovius, *Commentarii . . . e la vita di Scanderberg*, translated into French in 1544.

of humble expression and supplication to soften him, determined, in the last extremity, to await him, sword in hand. This action of his cut short his master's rage, who, seeing him play so honourable a part, received him into favour. The incident may suffer another interpretation by those who have not heard of this prince's prodigious strength and bravery. The Emperor Conrad the Third, having besieged Guelph, Duke of Bavaria, would vouchsafe no milder conditions — whatever base and dastardly terms of satisfaction were offered him — than to permit the gentlewomen who were besieged with the duke to go forth on foot, their honour secure, with whatever they could carry on their persons. And they, in greatness of heart, bethought them to take upon their backs their husbands and children and the duke himself. The emperor received such keen delight from witnessing the adroitness [1] of their courage, that he wept for joy, and quenched the bitterness of the mortal and capital hatred he had cherished against the duke, and thenceforth treated him and his courteously.[2]

(*b*) Either of these methods would readily prevail with me, for I have a wonderful propensity toward mercy and mildness; so much so that I believe I should more instinctively yield to compassion than to admiration. Yet pity is a vicious sentiment, according to the Stoics:[3] they would have us succour the afflicted, but not be bowed down in sympathy with them.[4] (*a*) Now these examples seem to me the more apt, inasmuch as we see in them these souls, when assailed and tested in these two ways, encounter the one without being shaken, and bend under the other. It may be said that to give way to commiseration and pity is the sign of an easy-going, kindly, and weak disposition; whence it happens that the feebler natures, as those of women and children and the common people, are most subject to this; but that, holding tears and prayers in contempt, to yield only to veneration for the sacred impersonation of courage is the sign of a

[1] *La gentillesse.*

[2] See Jean Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (Proemium). It was the siege of Weinsberg, in 1140.

[3] See Seneca, *De Clementia*, V.

[4] *Mais non pas qu'on flechisse et compatisse avec eux.*

strong and inflexible soul, which holds in admiration and honour virile and unyielding vigour. However, in less generous souls, astonishment and admiration may give birth to a like effect; witness the Thebans, who, having brought a capital charge against their captains for continuing to hold office beyond the time prescribed and preordained, absolved, not without much ado, Pelopidas, who bowed his head beneath the weight of such charges, and employed only entreaties and supplications to save himself. Whereas, on the contrary, in regard to Epaminondas, who eloquently recounted his achievements and taunted the people with them in a haughty and arrogant fashion, they had not the courage even to take the ballots in their hands, and the meeting broke up, greatly praising the high-heartedness of this personage.[1] (*c*) Dionysius the elder, having taken the city of Reggio after extreme delays and difficulties, and therein the commander, Phyton, a man of great worth, who had very obstinately defended the city, determined to make use of the occasion for an example of terrible vengeance. First, he told him that, on the day before, he had caused his son and all his kindred to be drowned. To which Phyton replied only that they were more fortunate than himself by one day. Then he caused him to be stripped and seized by the executioners and dragged through the city, scourging him most ignominiously and cruelly all the while, and in addition heaping violent and contumelious words upon him. But his courage never failed, or his self-possession; but, on the contrary, with steadfast mien, he continually declared in a loud voice the honourable and glorious cause of his death — that he would not surrender his country into the hands of a tyrant, whom he threatened with speedy punishment by the gods. Dionysius, reading in the eyes of his soldiers that, instead of being roused by the defiant words of this conquered foe in scorn of their leader and his triumph, they were becoming softened by their amazement at such rare courage, and were on the point of mutiny and even of snatching Phyton from the hands of the officials, consequently caused his martyrdom to come to an end, and sent him away secretly to be drowned in the sea.[2]

[1] See Plutarch, *How far a man may praise himself.*

[2] See Diodorus Siculus, XIV, 29.

(*a*) Truly man is a marvellously volatile, various, and wavering creature; it is difficult to base a stable and uniform judgement upon him. Look at Pompey, who pardoned the whole city of the Mamertines, against which he was greatly roused, in view of the courage and magnanimity of the citizen Zeno, who took upon himself alone the public misdeed, and sought no other favour than to bear alone the penalty of it.[1] And Sylla's host, having displayed the like courage in the city of Perugia, gained nothing thereby, either for himself, or for others.[2] (*b*) And, directly contrary to my first examples, the bravest of men, and the most merciful to the vanquished, Alexander, having forced the city of Gaza after many great difficulties, found there Betis, who was in command, of whose valour he had seen marvellous proofs during the siege, all covered with blood and wounds, still fighting in the midst of a number of Macedonians, who attacked him pell-mell.[3] Alexander, irritated by so costly a victory (for among other mischances he had received two fresh wounds on his body), cried out to him: "You shall not die as you have desired, Betis; be assured that you must suffer every kind of torture that can be invented for a prisoner." The other, with a countenance not only undismayed, but arrogant and haughty, said no word in reply to these threats. Whereupon Alexander, seeing his proud and persistent silence, cried: "Bends he not the knee? Has no sound of entreaty escaped him? Truly I will conquer this silence, and if I cannot extort a word from him, at least I will extort groans." And, his wrath becoming frenzy, he ordered that his heels should be pierced, and a cord passed through them, and had him dragged thus, alive, torn, and dismembered, at the tail of a cart.[4] May it be that courage was so natural and common a thing to him [Alexander] that, because he did not wonder at it, he thought less highly of it? (*c*) or that he considered it to belong so peculiarly to

[1] See Plutarch, *Political Precepts*, where the citizen is called Stheno.

[2] *Ibid.* The city was Præneste. The mistake was made by Amyot in the first edition of his translation (1572), where Montaigne found it. It was corrected in Amyot's edition of 1574. In the first edition (1580) the Essay ended here.

[3] *Qui le chamailloient de toutes parts.*

[4] See Quintus Curtius, IV, 6.

himself, that he could not endure seeing it at this height in another without the irritation of an emotion of envy? or that the natural impetuosity of his wrath could not brook opposition? In truth, if it could have been checked, we must believe that it would have been so in the capture and desolation of the city of Thebes, upon seeing so many valiant men destroyed, and having no longer any means of defence, cruelly put to the sword. For full six thousand were killed there, of whom not one was seen to take flight or ask quarter; on the contrary, they sought, some here some there through the streets, to defy their victorious enemies, provoking an honourable death. Nor was one seen who did not strive on to his last breath to avenge himself, and with the weapons of despair to console his own death with the death of some enemy. Yet the grievousness of their valour found no pity, and one day's length did not suffice to slake his vengeance. The carnage lasted till the last drop of blood was shed, and stopped only at those who were unarmed, — old men, women, and children, — to make of them thirty thousand slaves.[1]

CHAPTER II

OF SADNESS

Of this Essay the first sentence and the last are the most interesting. The first: "I am one of those least subject to this emotion"; and the last: "I am little subject to such violent emotions. My sensitiveness is naturally not keen, and I harden and deaden it every day intentionally." It is to be observed that these sentences were not in the Essay as first published in 1580; they were added eight years later, like those of the same character we have noted in the first Essay. It was during the intervening years that Montaigne had discovered a purpose for his writing, an aim for his thoughts, in the description, the delineation of himself as an aid in the study of man — the most important study man can pursue. The sentences above quoted are among the first lines of his self-portraiture.

The Essay opens with narratives exhibiting the effects of successive sorrows on some souls; those that receive the first blow with rigid calmness and are overwhelmed by a later lighter one. The old account of the painting of the sacrifice of Iphigenia and the turning Niobe to stone

[1] See Diodorus Siculus, XXVII, 4.

are introduced as symbolising that extremity of grief that cannot be represented. It is Dryden's thought (in the "Threnodia Augustalis"):—

> Sure there 's a lethargy in mighty woe;
> Tears stand congealed and cannot flow.
> And the sad soul retires into her inmost room,
> Tears for a stroke foreseen afford relief.
> But unprovided for a sudden blow,
> Like Niobe we marble grow
> And petrify with grief.

The tearless and fatal grief of a "seigneur allemand" is depicted (an addition in 1595); and then the essayist passes, through the violent emotions of love, to those caused by pleasure; unlooked-for delight may kill, and of this he gives a list of examples. An extreme emotion of shame, of mortification, may be deadly, as proved by Diodorus the Dialectician. And with this the Essay cut itself short in 1580. In 1588 another sentence was added, which, as I have said, echoed the first sentence of the Essay and connects itself with the expression in the "Apologie" (Book II, chapter 12) when, speaking of the evil of excessive sensibility, he says: *Il nous faut abestir pour nous assagir.*

I AM one of those least subject to this emotion,[1] (*c*) and I neither like nor respect it, although the world has undertaken, as if by agreement, to favour it with special honour. They clothe with it wisdom and virtue and knowledge: an absurd and deforming garment. The Italians have more aptly baptised malignity with its name;[2] for it is a quality always harmful, always foolish; and as being always cowardly and vile, the Stoics forbid the feeling to their ideal wise man.[3] But (*a*) the story says that Psammenitus, King of Egypt, having been defeated and captured by Cambyses, King of Persia, seeing his daughter pass by, a prisoner, dressed as a servant sent to draw water, all his friends around him weeping and lamenting, stood motionless and silent, his eyes fixed on the ground; and soon after, seeing his son led to death, he maintained the same demeanour. But, having perceived one of his household among the captives, he beat his head and gave way to extreme lamentation.[4] This might be coupled with what we

[1] This line first appeared in 1588.

[2] *Tristezza.* This word is open to various shades of meaning: sadness, sorrow, melancholy — even a gloomy, melancholy moroseness.

[3] See especially St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XIV, 8.

[4] See Herodotus, III, 14.

recently saw to be the case with one of our princes,[1] who, having heard at Trent, where he was, of the death of his eldest brother, — a brother upon whom, indeed, rested the support and honour of his family, — and very soon afterward of the death of a younger brother, its next hope; and having sustained these two assaults with exemplary firmness, when, some days later, one of his servants died, he allowed himself to be overcome by this last event, and, losing all his self-control, abandoned himself to mourning and regret, in such a way that it was argued by some that he had been touched to the quick only by the last blow; but the truth was that, being already full and over-full of sorrow, the slightest addition broke down the barriers of his endurance. The like might be thought, let me say, of our other tale, were it not that it adds that, when Cambyses asked Psammenitus why it was that, not being moved by the unhappy fate of his son and his daughter, he bore with so little patience that of his friend, "Because," he replied, "only that last grief could be shewn by tears; the first two far surpassed all means of expression." Perhaps, in this connection, we might recall the conceit of that ancient painter,[2] who, having to represent the mourning of those present at the sacrifice of Iphigenia according to the degree of each person's interest in the death of that innocent fair maid, having exhausted the last resources of his art, when it came to the maiden's father, he painted him with his face covered, as if no visage could evince that degree of grief. This is why poets describe that wretched mother Niobe, when she had lost, first, seven sons, and straightway as many daughters, over-burdened with her losses, as having at last been transformed to stone, —

[1] *Un prince des nostres.* Charles de Guise, Cardinal of Lorraine. This expression is to be distinguished from *un de nos princes*, which is used for members of French families, the houses of France and of Bourbon; the former is used for the house of Lorraine, which was foreign by origin. The cardinal was at the Council of Trent in 1563, at the time of the assassination of his brother François de Guise, and of the death also, after the battle of Dreux, of a younger brother, the Grand Prior.

[2] Timanthes, 4th century B.C. See Cicero, *Orator*, XXII; Pliny, *Natural History*, XXXV, 10; Valerius Maximus, VIII, 2, *ext.* 6; Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, II, 13.

Diriguisse malis,[1] —

to express that sombre, dumb, and deaf torpor that paralyses us when events surpassing our capability overwhelm us. In truth, the effect of an affliction, if it be extreme, must wholly stun the mind and deprive it of freedom of action; as, on the startling alarm of some very ill news, it happens to us to feel dazed and deadened, and, as it were, completely paralysed, in such wise that the mind, upon giving way later to tears and lamentations, seems to relax and disperse itself, and take a wider sweep, more at its ease.

(*b*) Et via vix tandem voci laxata dolore est.[2]

(*c*) In the war that King Ferdinand waged against the widow of King John of Hungary, near Buda, Raïsciac, a German lord, remarking the salvage of the body of a horse-trooper whom every one had noticed as having borne himself with exceeding gallantry, joined in the universal commiseration; but, sharing the general interest in seeing who he might be, after his armour was removed, he found that he was his own son. Amid the universal lamentation, he alone stood erect, without uttering a word or shedding a tear, his eyes fixed, gazing steadfastly upon him, until the violence of his grief congealed his vital powers, and felled him, stone dead, to the ground.[3]

(*a*) Chi può dir com' egli arde è in picciol fuoco,[4]

say the lovers who would describe an unendurable passion.

Misero quod omnes
Eripit sensus mihi. Nam simul te,
Lesbia, aspexi, nihil est super mi
Quod loquar amens.

[1] As having been petrified by calamity. — Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VI, 304. Montaigne adapted the original form of the verb (*diriguitque*) to his context.

[2] And at last, with difficulty, a passage for words is opened by grief. — Virgil, *Æneid*, XI, 151.

[3] About 1556. See Paulus Jovius, *Historiæ sui Temporis*, XXXIX. In 1595, the phraseology of these last sentences was changed somewhat, without changing the sense.

[4] He who can say how he burns is in no hot fire. — Petrarch, *Sonnet* 137.

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Lingua sed torpet, tenuis sub artus
Flamma dimanat, sonitu suopte
Tinniunt aures, gemina teguntur
Lumina nocte.[1]

(*b*) It is not in the most poignant and penetrating heat of the attack that we are in a fitting state to set forth our lamentations and our persuasions: the mind is then overloaded by intense thought and the body prostrated and languishing with love. (*a*) Et de la s'engendre parfois la defaillance fortuite, qui surprent les amoureux si hors de saison, et ceste glace qui les saisit, par la force d'une ardeur extreme, au giron mesme de la joüyssance. All passions which suffer themselves to be understood and marshalled in order [2] are but lukewarm.

Curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent.[3]

(*b*) The surprise of an unhoped-for joy stuns us equally.

Ut me conspexit venientem, et Troia circum
Arma amens vidit, magnis exterrita monstris,
Diriguit visu in medio; calor ossa reliquit;
Labitur, et longo vix tandem tempore fatur.[4]

(*a*) Besides the Roman woman who died of glad surprise on seeing her son return from the rout of Cannæ, Sophocles and Dionysius the Tyrant who died of joy, and Talva, who died in Corsica on reading the news of the honours which the Roman Senate had bestowed upon him,[5] we learn in our own

[1] Wretched man that I am, this [delight] deprives me of all my senses; as soon as I look upon thee, Lesbia, I can, in my delirium, utter nothing; my tongue is benumbed; a subtle flame spreads through my veins, my ears ring, darkness covers my eyes. — Catullus, LI, 5.

[2] *Qui se laissent gouster et digerer.*

[3] Light griefs can speak; great ones are dumb. — Seneca, *Hippolytus*, Act II, sc. 3, v. 607.

[4] When she beheld me approaching, and saw me surrounded by Trojan arms, she was terror-struck; aghast at the wonder, she fainted at the sight; warmth abandoned her limbs, and she fell; then, after a long time, she spoke with difficulty. — Virgil, *Æneid*, III, 306.

[5] These and similar examples of death caused by joy are found collected in many works in Latin of different periods. Montaigne did not take them from their original sources. The "Roman woman" and Dionysius and Diodorus (below) came from Pliny's *Natural History*, VII, 54; Sophocles and Talva from Valerius Maximus, IX, 12, *ext.* 5.

day that Pope Leo X, having been informed of the taking of Milan, which he had most ardently desired, felt such transports of joy that he was attacked by a fever and died of it.[1] And for a more noteworthy testimony of human weakness, it has been observed that Diodorus the Dialectician died suddenly, seized by an overwhelming sense of shame, when, in his school and in public, he could not explain a proposition put before him.

(*b*) I am little subject to such violent emotions. My sensitiveness[2] is naturally not keen, and I harden and deaden it every day intentionally.[3]

CHAPTER III

OUR FEELINGS EXTEND THEMSELVES BEYOND OUR PERCEPTIONS[4]

This Essay, like the last one, begins with an *addition*, and includes many, some made in 1588, some in 1595. It is now nine pages long; at first, in 1580, it was only three — a mere *leçon;* it began with the passage concerning Bertrand du Guesclin, and ended with that about the Emperor Maximilian; just a string of anecdotes. It was probably written about 1572.

The reflections, the comments, the remarks that now accompany the stories — the note of the moralist — are what constitute the interest of these pages for us. They are somewhat incoherent, but turn for the most part on the lack of wisdom shown in dwelling in the future, in not remaining *chez nous*.

And we have in this connection the statement for the first time of Montaigne's great principle — that of Socrates: "Do what is thine to do, and know thyself"; *Fay ton faict et te cognoy*.

An interesting paragraph is that regarding the desirableness of examining into the actions of princes after their death. We may find here a hint of one of Montaigne's great characteristics, his reverence for laws, his obedience to legal authority, united with an independence of mind which enables him always to judge of the man apart from the office.

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[1] See Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, XIV.

[2] *Apprehension.* Montaigne uses this word frequently in the sense of "the action of feeling anything emotionally" — an obsolete sense of the similar English word.

[3] *Je l'encrouste et espessis . . . par discours.*

[4] *Nos affections s'emportent au dela de nous.*

THOSE [1] who accuse men of ever looking eagerly toward future things, and instruct us to lay hold of present possessions and to establish ourselves in them, as having no grip upon what is to come, much less, indeed, than upon what is past, put their finger on the most common of human errors — if we dare give the name of error to what Nature herself impels us to, in the interest of the continuation of her work, (*c*) impressing upon us this false attitude of mind as well as many others; being more jealous of our doings than of our wisdom. (*b*) We are never in our true abiding-place, we are always somewhere else. Fear, desire, hope drive us toward the future and deprive us of the perception and consideration of what is; and we waste our time thinking of what will be, when in truth we ourselves shall be no more. (*c*) *Calamitosus est animus futuri anxius.*[2]

This great principle is often cited by Plato: "Do what thou hast to do, and know thyself."[3] Each of these phrases includes, in general terms, our whole duty; and, likewise, each includes its companion. He who would do what it is his duty to do would see that his first lesson is to find out what he is and what is proper to him; and he who knows himself does not see an action as belonging to him which is foreign to him, and he loves and cultivates himself before all else, declining superfluous occupations and futile ideas and suggestions. *Ut stultitia etsi adepta est quod concupivit nunquam setamen satis consecutam putat: sic sapientia semper eo contenta est quod adest, neque eam unquam sui pœnitet.*[4] Epicurus exempts the wise man from forethought and care for

[1] The first three pages were added in 1588 or 1595.

[2] Unfortunate is the mind that is troubled about the future. — Seneca, *Epistle* 98.6.

[3] In the *Timæus*.

[4] Whilst folly, although she has acquired what she desired, none the less never thinks that she has obtained enough, wisdom, on the contrary, is always content with whatever happens, and is never displeased by anything. — Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, V, 18.

In the edition of 1595, the following translation is substituted for this Latin passage: *Comme la folie, quand on luy octroyera ce qu'elle desire, ne sera pas contente, aussi est la sagesse contente de ce qui est present, ne se desplait jamais de soy.*

the future.[1] (*b*) Among the laws concerning the dead, that one seems to me very well founded which requires that the acts of princes be closely scrutinised after their death:[2] they are peers but not masters of the laws; since justice has little power over their lives, it is reasonable that it should have control over their reputations and over what belongs to their successors — matters which we often value more than life itself. It is a custom which affords peculiar advantages to those nations by which it is observed, and is desirable in the eyes of all good princes (*c*) who have cause to complain that the memory of bad princes is treated like their own. We owe submission and obedience equally to all kings, for those are due to the kingly office; but esteem, like affection, we owe to their virtue alone. Let us yield to political necessity so far as to endure them patiently when unworthy, to conceal their vices, to assist with our commendation their unimportant acts so long as their authority needs our support; but when this intercourse is at an end, it is not reasonable to deny to justice and our liberty the expression of our real sentiments, and particularly to refuse to good subjects the glory of having reverently and loyally served a master whose imperfections were so well known to them; for then would posterity be cheated of a useful example. And those who, through respect for some private indebtedness, basely espouse the memory of an unpraiseworthy prince, do private justice at the expense of public justice. Livy says truly,[3] that the speech of men brought up under a monarchy is always full of foolish boasting and worthless witness, each one equally exalting his king to the utmost degree of supreme worth and greatness. One may blame the great courage of those two soldiers who answered Nero to his face; the one, being asked why he wished him ill: "I loved you when you deserved it; but since you have become a parricide, an incendiary, a mountebank, and a coachman, I hate you as you deserve"; the other, being asked why he wished to kill him: "Because I see no other

[1] See Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, III, 15.
[2] See Diodorus Siculus, I, 6.
[3] See Book XXXV, 48.

remedy for your constant evil deeds."[1] But what sound understanding can blame the public and universal testimonies to his tyrannical and degrading conduct, which were borne after his death, and will be for all time, against him and all evil-doers like him?[2]

I can but regret that in so immaculate a polity as the Lacedæmonian there should have been introduced such an insincere ceremony at the death of their kings. All the federated states and their neighbours, and all the Helots, men and women pell-mell, slashed their foreheads as evidence of their grief, and declared amid their cries and lamentations that this king, whatever he had been, was the best of all their kings, ascribing to rank the praise which belonged to merit, and that which belongs to the highest merit, to the lowest degree.[3] Aristotle, who touches on all subjects, questions about the saying of Solon, that "no one before he is dead can be said to be happy," whether even the man who has lived and died as he could wish can be called happy if his renown grow less, if his posterity be wretched. While we are alive, we are by anticipation wherever we choose; but having ceased to be, we have no communication with what is; and therefore Solon had better have said that man is never happy, since he is so only after he has ceased to exist.[4]

> Quisquam
> Vix radicitus e vita se tollit, et eiicit:
> Sed facit esse sui quiddam super inscius ipse,
> Nec removet satis a projecto corpore sese et
> Vindicat.[5]

[1] See Tacitus, *Annals*, XV, 67, 68.

[2] The last phrase, *à luy et à tous meschans comme luy*, was added in 1595.

[3] See Herodotus, VI, 58.

[4] See the *Nicomachæan Ethics*, I, 10.

[5] The man who imperfectly uproots himself from life and casts himself out of it, but who unconsciously conceives something of himself to survive, does not sufficiently remove himself from the body that is thrown out, and lays claim to it. — Lucretius, III, 877, 878, 882, 883. The numbering here followed is that adopted by Cyril Bailey in the Oxford texts. *Quisquam* is an addition of Montaigne's. The original has *Nec* instead of *Vix* in the second line, and, at the end, *et illum se fingit*, instead of *sese et vindicat*.

(*a*)[1] Bertrand du Guesclin died at the siege of the castle of Rancon, near Le Puy in Auvergne.[2] The besieged, having surrendered later, were compelled to carry the keys of the citadel on the dead man's body. Barthelemys d'Alviano, commanding the army of the Venetians, having met death during their wars in La Bresse, and his body having to be taken back to Venice through Verona, a hostile territory, most of the army were of opinion that they should ask the Veronese for a safe-conduct for their march; but Theodore Trivulzio demurred, and chose rather to pass through by force, at the risk of a fight, "as it was not fitting," he said, "that he who had never in his life dreaded his enemies, being dead, should show fear of them."[3]

(*b*) In a similar matter, in fact, the Greek law provided that he who asked the enemy for a dead body, in order to bury it, by so doing renounced the victory, and therefore it was not permissible for him to erect a trophy: to him of whom the request was made, it was a proof of success. Thus Nicias lost the advantage he had clearly won over the Corinthians;[4] and, on the other hand, Agesilaus confirmed his very questionable victory over the Bœotians.[5]

(*a*) These acts might appear strange, had it not been the accepted practice in all ages, not only that we extend our care for ourselves beyond this life, but also to believe that very often the favours of Heaven accompany us to our grave and continue to our bones; of which there are so many ancient examples, to say nothing of our own time, that there is no need for me to enlarge upon the subject. Edward I, King of England, having experienced in the long wars between himself and Robert, King of Scotland, how great an advantage his presence gave to his affairs, having always been victorious in whatever he undertook in person, when he was dying, compelled his son to swear solemnly that, when dead, his body should be boiled, — in order to separate the flesh from the bones, — and the flesh buried;

[1] In the first edition of the Essays (1580), this chapter began here.
[2] See Jean Bouchet, *Annales d'Aquitaine.*
[3] See Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, XII.
[4] See Plutarch, *Life of Nicias.*
[5] See Idem, *Life of Agesilaus.*

and as for the bones, that they should be preserved, to be carried with him [the king] and the army whenever it should happen that there was war with the Scotch; as if destiny had linked victory inevitably to his bones. (*b*) Jean Vischa,[1] who embroiled Bohemia in defence of the heresies of Wyclif, ordered that his body should be flayed after death, and a drum be made of his skin, to be borne in war with his enemies, believing that it would help to continue the successes he had won in the wars waged by him against them. Certain Indian peoples in like manner carried into battle against the Spaniards the bones of one of their leaders, from consideration of the good fortune he had had in his lifetime.[2] And other nations in that same part of the world bear with them in war the bodies of the brave men who have fallen in their battles, to give them good luck and encourage them. (*a*) The first of these instances indicates a retention in the tomb only of the reputation acquired by past deeds; but the last would conjoin therewith the power of continued action.

The act of Captain Bayard is of a finer description, who, feeling himself to be mortally wounded by a shot from an arquebus, and being urged to withdraw from the battle, replied that he would not begin at the end of his life to turn his back to the enemy; and having fought as long as his strength lasted, feeling that he was fainting and about to fall from his horse, he bade his servant lay him at the foot of a tree, but in such wise that he would die facing the enemy, as he did.[3] I must add this other example, which is as remarkable for the sort of thing under consideration as any of the preceding. The Emperor Maximilian, great-grandfather of the present King Philip,[4] was a prince endowed to the full

[1] Changed to Zischa [Ziska] in 1595. Montaigne's source for this is uncertain. The fact is mentioned in various sixteenth-century compilations.

[2] See Lopez de Gomara, *Histoire Générale des Indes*, III, 22.

[3] Bayard was killed at the river Sesia in 1524. See *Mémoires* du Bellay, book II. These memoirs treat of the events in France from 1513 to the death of King Francis I. They are the work of two brothers, Martin, Seigneur de Langey, and Guillaume, who became Seigneur de Langey on his brother's death. They consist of ten books, of which the 5th, 6th, and 7th were written by Guillaume, the others by Martin.

[4] Philip II, of Spain.

with noble qualities, among others with singular physical beauty. But among his humours was this one, — quite the opposite of that of most princes, who, for the transaction of the most important affairs, make a throne of their close-stool, — that he never had a servant so familiar that he would allow him to see him in his closet: he would go apart to make water, being as modest as a maid in not exhibiting, to a physician or anybody else, the parts which we are wont to keep hidden. (*b*) I myself, who am so brazen of speech, am none the less naturally inclined to this same modesty: except under great pressure of necessity or of passion, I rarely put before another's eyes the organs and the acts which our manners ordain shall be kept out of sight; I constrain myself more about this than I think very fitting for a man, and especially for a man of the opinions I profess. (*a*) But he[1] reached such a pitch of superstition that he expressly ordered in his testament that they should put drawers on him when he was dead. He should have added a codicil to the effect that he who should put them on should be blindfolded.[2]

(*c*) Cyrus's behest to his children, that neither they nor any other person should see or touch his body after his soul had departed,[3] I attribute to some religious emotion of his; for both his biographer and himself, among their great qualities, gave indications throughout the whole course of their lives of a peculiar regard and veneration for religion. (*b*) I was not pleased with the tale told me by a great prince, of a kinsman of mine, a man well known both in peace and in war: it was to the effect that, when dying, very old, at court, and suffering extreme pain from stone, he employed all his last hours in arranging, with eager care, the honours and the ceremony of his burial, and urged all the nobles who visited him to promise to be present at his funeral. He made an urgent entreaty to this same prince, my informant, who saw him during these last hours, that he would order his household to attend, alleging many precedents and arguments to prove that it was a thing due to such a man as he

[1] Maximilian.

[2] In the editions prior to 1588, the chapter ended here.

[3] See Xenophon, *Cyropædeia*, VIII, 7, 26.

was; and he seemed to die content, having extorted that promise and having provided according to his desire for the arrangement and order of his parade. I have rarely known such persistent inanity. The other opposite crotchet (of which I am not lacking in examples near home) seems to me akin to this — namely, the taking great pains and being excited about this last matter to be arranged, — one's funeral train, — and reducing it to some peculiar and unaccustomed degree of parsimony, to one servant and a lantern. I hear people praise this whim, and the injunction of Marcus Æmilius Lepidus,[1] who forbade his heirs to go through the ceremonial which was customary on such occasions. Is it, indeed, moderation and frugality to avoid expense and luxury, the use and knowledge of which are beyond our ken? An easy reform that, and not costly. (*c*) If there were need to make rules about this matter, I should be of opinion that in this, as in all the acts of our lives, each man should make the rule correspond to the amount of his fortune. The philosopher Lycon wisely instructed his friends to put his body where they should think best, and, as to his obsequies, to let them be neither superfluous nor mean.[2] I would leave it simply to custom to regulate this ceremonial,[3] (*b*) and I shall trust myself to the discretion of any one into whose hands I shall fall in charge. (*c*) *Totus hic locus est contemnendus in nobis, non negligendus in nostris.*[4] And, as was said like a saint by a saint: *Curatio funeris, conditio sepulturæ, pompa exequiarum, magis sunt vivarum solatia quam subsidia mortuorum.*[5] Thus, when Crito asked Socrates, in his last hour, how he wished to be buried, Socrates answered: "As you please."[6] (*b*) If I had to occupy myself more about

[1] See Livy, Epitome of book XLVIII.

[2] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Lycon.*

[3] Cf. Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, I, 45. The following clause of 1588 is omitted: *et sauf les choses requises au service de ma religion si c'est en lieu où il soit besoing de l'enjoindre.*

[4] All this matter is to be entirely disregarded for ourselves, but not to be neglected for those dear to us. — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, I, 45.

[5] The ordering of a funeral, the nature of the burial-place, and the procession are more for the solace of the living than for the succour of the dead. — St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, I, 12.

[6] See Plato, *Phædo*; Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, I, 43.

this, it would seem to me more spirited [1] to imitate those persons who, while living and breathing, entertain themselves about the order and honourableness of their burial, and who take pleasure in seeing in marble their dead features. Happy they who can rejoice and gratify their minds by insensibility, and live in their death!

(*c*) I am almost moved to irreconcilable hatred against every sort of popular domination, although it seems the most natural and equitable, when I remember the inhuman injustice of the Athenian people in putting to death without mercy, and refusing even to hear in their own defence, the gallant officers who had just beaten the Lacedæmonians in the naval battle near the Arginusæ Islands, — the most hotly contested and the hardest battle that the Greeks ever fought on the sea, — because they [the officers] had followed up such opportunities as the laws of war offered them rather than stay to collect and bury their dead. And the behaviour of Diomedon makes this punishment the more odious: he was one of the condemned — a man of noteworthy excellence both military and political; he, coming forward to speak after having heard the decree of condemnation, and finding only then an opportunity to be heard without interruption, instead of taking advantage of it to the profit of his own cause and to lay bare the patent iniquity of so barbarous a judgement, expressed only solicitude for the salvation of his judges, beseeching the gods to turn that judgement to their advantage; and lest, by the non-performance of the vows that he and his companions had made in gratitude for their eminent good-fortune, they [2] might draw down upon themselves the wrath of the gods, he told them what those vows were; and without other words, and without discussion, he went boldly to his doom.[3] Some years later fortune punished them with a taste of the same sauce; [4] for Chabrias, the captain-general of their naval force, having had the upper hand in the battle against Pollis, the Spartan admiral, off the island of Naxos, lost the whole fruit,

[1] *Galand.*
[2] The judges.
[3] See Diodorus Siculus, XIII, 31, 32.
[4] *De mesme pain souppe.* See Idem, XV, 9.

absolutely and completely,[1] of his victory (which was of great importance to their affairs), in order not to incur the ill-fortune of the foregoing instance; and, in order not to lose a few dead bodies of his friends which were floating on the sea, he allowed a multitude of living enemies to sail away unharmed, who afterward made them pay dear for that ill-timed superstition.

Quæris quo jaceas, post obitum, loco?
Quo non nata jacent.[2]

These other verses restore the sense of repose to a body without a soul: —

Neque sepulchrum, quo recipiat, habeat portum corporis,
Ubi, remissa humana vita, corpus requiescat a malis;[3]

just as nature shows us that many dead things have still occult relations with life. Wine becomes different in the cellar, in accordance with some variations of the seasons of the wine; and the flesh of the deer changes its condition and taste in the salting-house, according to the laws that govern living flesh, so it is said.

CHAPTER IV

HOW THE SOUL VENTS ITS EMOTIONS ON FALSE OBJECTS WHEN TRUE ONES ARE LACKING

The title indicates the theme of this short Essay; it opens by declaring that "the mind when disturbed and excited" must have "*some* object to seize and work upon"; and thus we quarrel with even inanimate things — not only with inanimate things, but with the gods, with God himself. Man, and also the brute beasts, when inwardly moved, direct themselves to definite objects; and if circumstances do not furnish the emotions with a true object for their exercise, they create for themselves

[1] *Perdit le fruit tout net et contant.*

[2] You ask where you will be after death? Where the unborn are. — Seneca, *Troades*, Act II, ll. 30, 31 (400, 401).

[3] He has no tomb to receive him, no refuge for his body, where, released from human life, it may repose from ills. — Ennius, quoted in Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, I, 44.

false objects; witness lap-dogs and the like; witness the blows and kicks given by children, and grown-up children, to inanimate things; witness inane curses. For another class of actions, due to unconscious bewilderment, consider the tearing of the hair, the beating of the breast, the knocking one's head against a wall, the defiance of the gods and of Fortune; all the *dérèglements* of our human intelligence.

A GENTLEMAN of our day, who was terribly subject to gout, being urged by his physicians to abstain altogether from salt meats, was wont to reply jocosely that in the paroxysms and torture of the disease, he wanted to have something to lay the blame on; and that, storming and cursing at one time about sausage, at another about tongue, and again about ham, he felt greatly relieved. But in all seriousness, as, when the arm is raised to strike, it annoys us if the blow meets no object but is wasted on the air; and as, to make a view pleasant to the eye, it must not be lost and spread out to the dim horizon, but should have rising ground to limit it within a reasonable distance, —

> (*b*) Ventus ut amittit vires, nisi robore densæ
> Occurrant silvæ spatio diffusus inani,[1] —

(*a*) so it would seem that the mind, when disturbed and excited, goes astray of itself, if we do not give it something to lay hold of; and it must always be supplied with some object to seize and work upon. Plutarch says,[2] speaking of those who become attached to monkeys and little dogs, that the affectionate part of us, in this way, for lack of a legitimate object, fashions a false and frivolous one rather than remain useless. And we see that the mind, when most excited, deceives itself, setting up a false and fanciful object, even contrary to its own belief, rather than not act against something. (*b*) So the anger of wild animals drives them to attack the stone or the spear which has wounded them, and to take vengeance on themselves with their own teeth for the pain they suffer.

[1] As a wind loses its strength, meeting with no opposition from a dense forest, and is dissipated in the void. — Lucan, III, 362.

[2] In the *Life of Pericles*.

Pannonis haud aliter post ictum sævior ursa,
Cum jaculum parva Lybis amentavit habena,
Se rotat in vulnus, telumque irata receptum
Impetit, et secum fugientem circuit hastam.[1]

(*a*) What causes do we not invent for the misfortunes that befall us! What do we not take offence at, rightly or wrongly, in order to have something to spar with! It was not those fair locks that you are tearing, or the whiteness of that breast which in anger you beat so cruelly, that killed your beloved brother with a miserable bit of lead; turn your wrath elsewhere.

(*c*) Livy, speaking of the Roman army in Spain after the loss of the two brothers, its great captains, says: *Flere omnes repente et offensare capita.*[2] That is a common custom. And the philosopher Bion — did he not remark facetiously of that king who in his grief tore out his hair, "Does he think that baldness is a cure for grief?"[3] (*a*) Who has not seen men chew and swallow cards and gulp down dice, by way of revenge for the loss of their money? Xerxes (*c*) whipped the Hellespont, and branded it, and caused numberless insults to be heaped upon it, and (*a*) sent a challenge to Mount Athos;[4] and Cyrus delayed a whole army for several days, that he might avenge himself on the river Gyndus for the alarm he had had in crossing it;[5] and Caligula destroyed a very beautiful house because of the suffering[6] his mother had endured in it. (*c*) In my youth it was said by the common people that one of our neighbouring kings, having received a scourging at God's hands, swore to be revenged upon him, and decreed that for ten years no one should pray to or speak of him, and that, so long as he himself had au-

[1] So the Pannonian bear, the fiercer after being wounded by the Libyan lance hurled at her by its slender thong, turns upon the wound and furiously assaults the shaft lodged in her, and circles about the dart that flees with her. — Lucan, VI, 220.

[2] All burst into tears and beat their heads. — Livy, XXV, 37. The two brothers were Publius and Cneius Scipio.

[3] See Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, III, 26.

[4] See Herodotus, VII, 35; Plutarch, *Of the Cure of Anger.*

[5] See Herodotus, I, 189.

[6] The text reads *pour le plaisir*, but this is thought to be an unquestionable misprint. See Seneca, *De Ira*, III, 22.

thority, no one should believe in him; the intention of which tale was not so much to depict the folly as the vain-glory natural to the nation of which it was told. These vices are always found together, but such actions are due, in truth, rather more to presumption than to stupidity. (*a*) Augustus Cæsar, having been beaten about by a storm at sea, undertook to brave the god Neptune, and, in the celebration of the games in the Circus, had his statue removed from its place among the other gods, as his revenge upon him.[1] In which he was even less excusable than those already spoken of, and less than he himself was later, when, Quintilius Varus having lost a battle in Germany, he went about in rage and despair, beating his head against the wall and shouting, "Varus, give me back my soldiers!"[2] For they go beyond all degrees of folly — since impiety is added to it — who attack God himself,[3] or Fortune, as if she had ears open to our clamour; (*c*) after the manner of the Thracians, who, when it thunders or lightens, begin to shoot arrows at the sky in a titanic sort of revenge, in order to bring God to reason. (*a*) Now, as that poet of old says, quoted by Plutarch,

> Point ne se faut courroucer aux affaires;
> Il ne leur chaut de toutes nos cholères.[4]

(*b*) But we shall never say enough in derision of the disorderliness of our mind.

[1] See Suetonius, *Life of Augustus*, 16.

[2] See *Ibid.*, 23.

[3] In the editions of 1580–1588, the text reads: *à Dieu mesmes à belles injures*; the last phrase was omitted in 1595.

[4] Amyot's translation of a passage in Plutarch, *Of the tranquillity of the mind.*

> Need is not to be vexed by happenings;
> All our anger affects them not.

CHAPTER V

WHETHER THE COMMANDANT OF A BESIEGED STRONGHOLD SHOULD GO FORTH TO PARLEY

THIS is one of the Essays that show Montaigne's interest in military affairs. They are found only in the first Book, though traces of the essayist's familiarity with the life of a soldier are to be found throughout. Their subject-matter is now without interest for us. Our sieges and parleyings are of a different character from those of the sixteenth century. But Montaigne's treatment of these subjects is of importance to the student of his character, from its unconscious self-revelation.

Another point of interest may be found in the sentence in which Montaigne asserts, or at least suggests, that the civilization "among those nations whom we so unhesitatingly call Barbarians" may be in some respects equal to our own. The thought is like a forerunner of the later Essay "Of Cannibals."

In this Essay there is only one openly personal remark — the last sentence, added (as before) in 1588. Montaigne made many additions in 1588 and 1595, doubling the Essay in length.

LUCIUS MARCIUS, the Roman legate during the war against Perseus, King of Macedon, wishing to gain the time required to put the Roman army in condition, scattered suggestions of future agreement,[1] whereby the king was thrown off his guard and agreed to a truce for several days, thus affording his enemy an opportunity and leisure to prepare himself; as a result the king was utterly overthrown.[2] But the elders of the Senate, mindful of the customs of their fathers, denounced this device as contrary to their former practice, (*c*) which was, they said, to fight with valour, not with cunning, nor by surprises and night attacks; nor by counterfeited retreats and unexpected returns; never entering into a war until they had proclaimed it, and often not until they had

[1] *Entregets d'accord.* See Livy, XLII, 43.

[2] The following passage, down to the line from the Æneid, "Dolus an," etc., was substituted in the edition of 1595 for the following reading of 1580–1588: *Si est-ce que le Senat Romain, à qui le seul advantage de la vertu sembloit moyen juste pour acquerir la victoire, trouva cette pratique laide et deshonneste, n'ayant encores ouy sonner à ses oreilles cette belle sentence:* —

appointed the time and place of the battle. On this principle they sent back to Pyrrhus his treacherous physician,[1] and to the Faliscans their disloyal schoolmaster.[2] Such were the characteristically Roman methods, not those of Greek subtlety and Punic craft, which hold it to be less glorious to conquer by force than by fraud. To deceive may serve for the moment; but he alone considers himself vanquished who knows that he has been so, neither by stratagem nor by chance, but by valour, array against array, in a loyal and just war.[3] (*a*) It is plain enough, from this language on the part of those good people, that they had not as yet accepted this fine saying, —

> Dolus an virtus quis in hoste requirat?[4]

(*c*) The Achaians, says Polybius,[5] detested all manner of deceit in their wars, deeming that no victory when the courage of the enemy was not cast down. *Eam vir sanctus et sapiens sciet veram esse victoriam, quæ salva fide et integra dignitate, parabitur*,[6] says another.

> Vosne velit an me regnare hera, quidve ferat fors,
> Virtute experiamur.[7]

In the kingdom of Ternates, among those nations whom we so unhesitatingly[8] call Barbarians, it is the custom not to enter into war without having first proclaimed it, adding a full declaration of the means, of all kinds, that they have at

[1] See Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus*.

[2] See Idem, *Life of Camillus*.

[3] See Livy, XLII, 43, for the whole story. The addition of the edition of 1595 is almost a literal translation.

[4] What matters it whether cunning or courage be used against an enemy? — Virgil, *Æneid*, II, 390.

[5] Montaigne did not take this remark from Polybius, but from the *Politiques* of Justus Lipsius, V, 17.

[6] A conscientious and wise man must know the only true victory to be that which is won without the violation of good faith and honour. — Florus, I, 12, 6. This quotation, also, Montaigne took, not from the original, but from the same page of Lipsius.

[7] Let us test by valour whether all-powerful Fortune wills that you or that I shall reign, or what she brings us. — Ennius, in Cicero, *De. Officiis*, I, 12.

[8] *Si à pleine bouche.*

their command — how many men, what supplies, what weapons, offensive and defensive. But also, that being done, if their enemies do not yield and come to an agreement, they feel at liberty to do their worst, and do not think that they can be reproached with treason or cunning, whatever means they make use of to conquer.[1] The ancient Florentines were so far from desiring to obtain advantage over their enemies by surprise, that they gave them warning a month before putting their army in the field, by the constant ringing of the bell they called "Martinella."[2]

(*a*) As for our less superstitious selves, who hold the honour of war to be his who has the benefit of it, and who, following Lysander, say that, where the lion's skin does not suffice, we must add to it a piece of the fox's,[3] the most common occasions of surprise are derived from such doing, and there is no time, we say, when a commander should have a more watchful eye than that of parleys and treaties of peace; and for that reason, it is a rule echoed by all the military men of our day, that the commandant of a besieged stronghold must never himself go outside the gates to parley. In the time of our fathers, the lords of Montmord and of Assigni, who were defending Mousson against the Count of Nassau, were blamed for so doing.[4] But yet, in this matter, he would be excusable who should manage his going out in such a way that safety and advantage would remain with him, as Count Guy de Rangon did in the city of Reggio (if we are to believe du Bellay about it, for Guicciardini says [5] that it was he himself), when the Lord of l'Escut approached the walls to parley; for he was so far from abandoning his safe ground that, a disturbance having arisen during the negotiation, not only did Monsieur de l'Escut and his soldiers, who had come out with him, find themselves the weaker party, so that Alessandro Trivulzio was killed, but he himself was forced, as the safest course, to follow the

[1] Goulard, *Histoire du Portugal*, XIV, 16.
[2] See Giovanni Villani, *Cronica*, VI, 75.
[3] See Plutarch, *Life of Lysander*.
[4] See *Mémoires* du Bellay, I, 22.
[5] Guicciardini, IV; du Bellay, I, 29. Guicciardini was governor of Reggio.

count, and, upon faith in his word, to seek shelter in the town.

(*b*) Eumenes, in the city of Nora, being urged by Antigonus, who was besieging him, to come forth to treat with him, Antigonus alleging, after many other pretences, that it was right that he should come to him since he [Antigonus] was the greater and stronger, — having made this noble response: "I shall never deem any man greater than myself so long as my sword is mine," — did not consent to come out until Antigonus had given him, at his demand, his own nephew, Ptolomæus, as a hostage.[1] (*a*) It is indeed true that there have been others who have found it very advisable to go out on the word of the assailant: witness Henry de Vaux, a knight of Champagne, who being besieged in the Castle of Commercy, and Barthelemy de Bonnes, who commanded the besiegers, having from outside caused the greater part of the castle to be mined, so that nothing was needed, to bury the besieged under the ruins, but to fire the train — he summoned the said Henry to come out to parley with him for his own advantage, which he did, with three others; and his certain destruction being made plain to his own eyes, he perceived himself to be deeply indebted to his enemy, by whose direction, after he and his troop had surrendered, the mine being fired, and the wooden props giving way, the castle was destroyed from roof to cellar.[2]

(*b*) I readily trust to the word of another, but I should be slow to do so when it could be thought that I had done it more from despair and lack of courage, than in freedom of spirit and from confidence in his loyalty.

[1] See Plutarch, *Life of Eumenes*.
[2] See Froissart, I, 209.

CHAPTER VI

THE HOUR OF PARLEYS IS A DANGEROUS TIME

AGAIN we have consideration of the principles of warfare; the first paragraph more interesting than before because concerned with conditions that occurred in 1569, the siege of the little village of Mussidan in Montaigne's immediate neighbourhood. Montaigne, it has been observed, disclaims with covert irony the accusation of treason brought against the besieging royalists. In another century, he admits, there might have been some colour in the accusation, but in the present one, "Our ways are entirely unlike former rules of conduct, and we should not expect to place confidence in one another until the last pledge of engagement has been given."

Later paragraphs narrate other sixteenth-century incidents. Originally the Essay consisted chiefly of these; the classical illustrations were added in 1595.

There are two little personal touches, both expressive of moral feeling. "I am surprised," he says, "at the extension Xenophon gives these privileges [of war] . . . and I do not accede to the measure of his dispensation in all things and everywhere" (1595).

On a later page he quotes, in 1580, Ariosto's lines,

> Fu il vincer sempre mai laudabil cosa,
> Vincasi o per fortuna o per ingegno, —

remarking: "But the philosopher Chrysippus would not have been of that opinion"; in 1588 he added, "and I as little."

TO continue, I saw lately in my neighbourhood, at Mussidan, that those whom our army expelled thence by force, and also others of their party, cried out on treachery because, during the negotiations and while the parleying was still going on, they had been surprised and cut to pieces [1] — a point of view which might perchance have been reasonable in another age. But, as I just said, our ways are entirely unlike former rules of conduct, and we should not expect to place confidence in one another until the last pledge of engagement has been given; even then there is enough to look after.

(*c*) It has always been a dangerous decision to entrust to the unbridled liberty of a victorious army the observance of the faith pledged to a city which has surrendered on mild

[1] Mussidan was besieged in April, 1569. See de Thou, *History*, V.

and favourable terms, and to allow the troops free entry in hot blood. Lucius Æmilius Regillus, the Roman prætor, having wasted much time trying to take the city of Phocæa by force, because of the extraordinary prowess of the people in defending themselves, made an agreement with them to receive them as friends of the Roman people, and to make his entry as into an allied city, relieving them from all fear of hostile action. But having taken his army into the city, in order to present himself with greater pomp, it was not in his power, whatever effort he might make, to bridle his soldiers; and he saw a large part of the city sacked before his eyes, the claims of avarice and vengeance overriding those of his authority and of military discipline.[1]

(*a*) Cleomenes said that, whatever injury one can inflict on the enemy in war is above the realm of justice and not subject to it, whether before gods or men; and having made a truce with the Argives for seven days, the third night after, he fell upon them when they were all asleep, and killed them declaring that in the truce no mention was made of nights;[2] but the gods avenged this treacherous sophistry.

(*c*) During the parley, and while they were deliberating upon their guaranties, they of Casilinum were taken by surprise; [3] and that nevertheless in the age of the most honourable captains and of the most perfect military discipline among the Romans; for there is no rule that according to time and place we may not take advantage of our enemies' folly as we do of their cowardice. And certainly war has many reasonable privileges not consonant with reason; and in this case the rule fails: *Neminem id agere ut ex alterius prædetur inscitia.*[4] But I am surprised at the extension which Xenophon gives these privileges,[5] both by his words and by divers deeds of his perfect Emperor — he being a

[1] See Livy, XXXVII, 32.

[2] See Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians.*

[3] In the first instance, Montaigne wrote in the Latin text of this passage: *Casilinum inter colloquia, cunctationemque petentium fidem, per occasionem captum est* (Livy, XXIV, 19), for which he afterwards substituted the translation.

[4] No one should so act as to profit by another's ignorance. — Cicero, *De Off.*, III, 17.

[5] In the *Cyropædeia.*

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writer of wonderful weight in such matters, as a great captain and as a philosopher among the first disciples of Socrates; and I do not accede to the measure of his dispensation in all things and everywhere.

(*a*) When Monsieur d'Aubigny was besieging Capua,[1] and after he had made a fierce assault, Signor Fabricio Colonna, commander of the city, having begun to discuss terms of surrender from the top of a bastion, and his soldiers having relaxed their watchfulness, ours took possession of the city, killing right and left. And in still more recent times, at Yvoy,[2] Signor Jullian Rommero, having adopted the blundering course [3] of going out to parley with the Constable, on his return found the place taken. But, that we might not go unpunished, when the Marquis of Pescara was besieging Genoa, where Duke Octaviano Fregoso commanded, under our protection, and when the accord between them had been carried so far that it was regarded as settled and on the point of being concluded, the Spaniards, having crept into the town, treated it as if they had won a complete victory.[4] And later, at Ligny en Barrois, where the Count of Brienne commanded, the Emperor in person having laid siege to the town, and Bertheville, the said count's lieutenant, having come out to parley, during the parley the place was taken.[5]

> Fu il vincer sempre mai laudabil cosa,
> Vincasì o per fortuna o per ingegno,[6]

they say. But the philosopher Chrysippus would not have been of that opinion, (*b*) and I as little; (*a*) for he said that they who run races ought to put forth all their powers of swiftness, but that it was in no wise allowable for them to put their hand on their opponent to stop him, or to thrust out

[1] See Guicciardini, V, 2.

[2] Montaigne is here in error. The incident he narrates occurred at the siege of Dinan (in the neighbourhood of Liège) in 1554. He very likely knew of it by oral report. See de Thou, and G. Paradin, *Continuation de l'histoire de notre temps*.

[3] *Ce pas de clerc*.

[4] See Guicciardini, XIV, 5; also, du Bellay, II, 43.

[5] See du Bellay, IX, 328.

[6] It is always glorious to conquer, whether the victory be due to chance or to skill. — Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, Canto XV, 1.

their leg to trip him.[1] (*b*) And even more magnanimously that great Alexander replied to Polypercon, who was urging him to make use of the advantage that the darkness of the night gave him to attack Darius: "No, far be it from me to seek victories by stealth; *malo me fortunæ pœniteat quam victoriæ pudeat.*" [2]

> Atque idem fugientem haud est dignatus Orodem
> Sternere nec jacta cæcum dare cuspide vulnus:
> Obvius adversoque occurrit, seque viro vir
> Contulit, haud furto melior, sed fortibus armis.[3]

CHAPTER VII

THAT OUR ACTIONS SHOULD BE JUDGED BY OUR INTENTION

The central passage of this Essay, that beginning "We can not be held responsible beyond our strength and our resources," expresses the thought that it is not the actual result of our actions but what we desire should be the result — our intentions — that is to be judged by the laws of duty. It is a comment on the title.

Stories precede and follow it; the subject of the first is the effect of our death, or other involuntary circumstances, on our promises and pledges. This tragedy was a recent event (1568) when Montaigne was writing, and it made a great sensation. But the special point on which Montaigne dwells — the entreaty of Count Egmont — is mentioned in no account of the event. M. Villey says: "Je crois que Montaigne tient ce fait de la tradition orale. . . . Montaigne est ici, probablement, la première source à laquelle nous puissions nous référer."

Guillaume Bouchet in his "Serees" (1597), says: "La Montagne recite du Comte d'Aiguemont" the above fact.

The second story notes the insufficiency of the justice we may do, and the iniquity of the injustice we may do after our death.

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[1] See Cicero, *De Off.*, III, 10.

[2] I would rather have a misfortune to regret than a victory that should cause me shame. — Quintus Curtius, IV, 13; Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*.

[3] And he did not deign to attack Orodes as he fled, nor to wound him from behind with a throw of his lance; he ran in front of him, meeting him face to face, and fought man against man, conquering, not by stealth, but by force of arms. — Virgil, *Æneid*, X, 732.

Montaigne, passing judgement on these examples, says: "It would seem" that death could not free Henry VII from his pledge; and that death was not necessary to release Count Egmont from his obligation.

These pages simply mirror the moral reflections that were passing through Montaigne's mind in the early days of his authorship, before his individual method and meaning had become defined to himself.

The last sentence is a personal one, added, as before, in 1595: "I shall be on my guard, if I can, that my death may say nothing which my life has not previously said." The Essay originally ended with "the mason in Herodotus," and was a mere *leçon*.

DEATH, they say, releases us from all our engagements; I know some who have regarded this differently. Henry the Seventh, King of England, made an agreement with Dom Philip, son of the Emperor Maximilian, — or, to give him a position of higher honour, father of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, — that the said Philip should deliver into his hands his enemy, the Duke of Suffolk, of the White Rose party, who had fled from England and retired to the Low Countries; while, on his side, he promised to make no attempt on the life of the said duke; but when dying, by his testament he expressly ordered his son to put the duke to death as soon as he himself should be dead.[1] Lately,[2] in the tragedy which the Duke of Alva gave us to see at Brussels, of Count Horn and Count Egmont,[3] there were many noteworthy incidents, among others, this: that the said Count Egmont, on the faith of whose guaranty Count Horn had surrendered himself to the Duke of Alva, demanded with great earnestness that he should be put to death first, to the end that his death might release him from his pledge to the said Count Horn. It would seem that death did not discharge the former[4] from his plighted faith, and that the latter[5] was released from his, even without dying. We cannot be held responsible beyond our strength and our resources; for this reason, that results and consequences are in no wise within our power, and that there is, in truth, nothing within our power but our will; upon that are necessarily based and established all the rules

[1] In 1506. See du Bellay, I, 7.
[2] In 1568.
[3] In 1580: *ausquels il fit trancher la teste.*
[4] Henry VII.
[5] Count Egmont.

of the duty of man. Thus Count Egmont, holding his soul and his will pledged to his promise, although the power to put it into execution was not in his hands, was unquestionably absolved from his duty, even had he survived Count Horn. But the King of England, having by intention broken his word, cannot be excused because he postponed the execution of his faithlessness until after his death; any more than the mason in Herodotus,[1] who, having loyally kept while he lived the secret of the treasures of his master the King of Egypt, disclosed it to his children when dying.

(*c*) I have known many persons of my own time, being convicted by their conscience of retaining what belonged to others, to attempt to set it right by their testament, and after their death. They do nothing worth while, whether in taking time for so urgent a matter, or in thinking to atone for a wrong with so little effort and sacrifice on their part. They owe more of what belongs to them. And the more irksomely and inconveniently they pay, the more just and meritorious is their atonement. Repentance asks to carry a burden. They do even more who reserve the revelation of some feeling of hate against their neighbour for their last expression, having concealed it during their life; and they prove that they have but little regard for their own honour,—thus rousing the anger of the offended man against their memory, — and less for their conscience, being unable, even in the presence of death itself, to put an end to their ill-will, but prolonging its life beyond their own. Iniquitous judges, who put off judging until they no longer have knowledge of the cause! I shall be on my guard, if I can, that my death may say nothing which my life has not previously said.

[1] Book II, 121.

CHAPTER VIII

OF IDLENESS

In an Essay written some seven years later ("Of the affection of fathers for their children," Book II, chapter 8), Montaigne thus refers to his state of mind at this time: "It was a melancholy mood, and consequently one much opposed to my natural disposition, brought about by weariness of the solitude in which a few years ago I buried myself, which first put into my head this idle thought of writing."

It is not physical but mental idleness that Montaigne has in mind, and he declares that, if the mind is not occupied with a definite subject, which guides it and restrains it, it wanders hither and thither in the vague field of dreams. It is of his own experience he is thinking. He here tells us that he had lately withdrawn from public affairs, and had sought solitude, thinking thus to benefit his mind by allowing it to follow its own course. But no, he found that now, aimlessly wandering, it created such chimerical and fantastic imaginations, disorderly and meaningless, that he had begun to write them down, so that he might in time shame his own intelligence.

I cannot believe that these "chimères et monstres fantasques" which he thought well to "mettre en rolle" are to be found in any of the Essays. His contemplation of them would seem to have led him to their exact opposite, the simple statement of facts and comment upon them, which marks the character of his first "manner." The Essays show no trace of *ineptie* and *étrangeté*. They are not the records that he says he made of these qualities.

AS we find fields that lie fallow, if they are rich and fertile, continue to abound in a hundred thousand kinds of wild and useless plants, and that, to keep them serviceable, we must bring them under subjection, and make them produce certain crops for our profit; and as we see that women, quite by themselves, produce shapeless masses and lumps of flesh, but that, to assure a sound and natural birth, we must fertilize them with other seed,[1] so it is with our minds: if we do not keep them occupied with a distinct subject, which curbs and restrains them, they run aimlessly to and fro, in the undefined field of imagination, —

[1] See Plutarch, *Marriage Precepts*.

(*b*) Sicut aquæ tremulum labris ubi lumen ahenis
Sole repercussum, aut radiantis imagine Lunæ,
Omnia percolitat late loca, jamque sub auras
Erigitur, summique ferit laquearia tecti.[1]

(*a*) And there is no folly or fantasy to which they do not give birth in this agitation.

Velut ægri somnia, vanæ
Finguntur species.[2]

The mind that has no fixed goal loses itself; for, as they say, to be everywhere is to be nowhere.

(*b*) Quisquis ubique habitat, Maxime, nusquam habitat.[3]

(*a*) When, not long ago, I withdrew into my own house, determined, so far as it was in my power, to take no thought of any thing except to pass in peace and by myself the little of life that remains for me, it seemed to me that I could do my mind no greater service than to leave it in complete and idle liberty to commune with itself and to give itself pause and steady itself; which I hoped that it could do thenceforth the more easily, having become with time far more solid and more mature; but I find, —

variam semper dant otia mentem,[4] —

that, on the contrary, like a runaway horse, it is a hundred times more active for itself than it ever was for another, and presents me with so many chimeras and fanciful monsters, one after another, irregular and unmeaning, that, in order to consider at leisure their absurdity and strangeness, I have begun to put them on paper, hoping in time to make my mind ashamed of itself.

[1] Like a dancing light from water within brazen vats, reflected from the sun or from the form of the radiant moon, that flits afar in every direction, and now rises in air and strikes the lofty fretted ceilings. — Virgil, *Æneid*, VIII, 22.

[2] Unreal monsters are imagined, like a sick man's dreams. — Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 7.

[3] He who dwells everywhere, Maximus, dwells nowhere. — Martial, VII, 73.

[4] Leisure ever breeds an inconstant mind. — Lucan, IV, 704.

CHAPTER IX

OF LIARS

That Montaigne should enter on the subject of liars by a discourse on his own memory is humorously characteristic, and it is not so strange an opening as it may seem. It has been known from ancient days that a good memory is necessary if one would successfully tell lies, and Montaigne feels that it somewhat consoles him for lack of memory, to be thus hindered by Nature from lying. "In truth, lying is an accursed vice." He declares his own memory to be singularly bad, so extraordinarily bad that he says, jestingly, it might really be a cause for renown.[1] This statement has been much commented on, and has been accused of being a falsehood and an affectation. There is no ground for such accusation; the Essays give no proof of either an accurate memory or a long one. Montaigne's mind was too full of *thoughts* to make and retain *records*.

In this connection he notes a curious fact, that those of the country about him "do not perceive any difference between memory and understanding," which his friend Charron in some sort, later confirmed, saying, "The common people, whose judgement is never sound, more greatly admire [*fait plus de feste de*] memory than imagination or understanding."

Montaigne continues by remarking regretfully that the same words that describe a lack of memory imply ingratitude; and that it is said of him himself, — "qui ne scait rien si bien faire qu'estre amy," — "he has forgotten his promise . . . he has forgotten to do or say this or that . . . for me. Certainly," he declares, "I can easily forget, but to be indifferent about the service my friend has asked of me, that I am not."

He consoles himself for this deficiency by two results of it: the one, that he cannot tell long stories — so often too long! and the other, that he quickly forgets offences, and that places and books seen and read for a second time "always charm me with the freshness of novelty."

This paragraph so stood in 1588; in 1595 his prime consolation was that this *misère* preserved him from ambition, and strengthened in him other more intellectual faculties.

He then starts off on considerations of the relations between memory and lying, and the dangers that ensue if the memory *n'est bien assurée*. In the earliest form of the Essay he went on immediately with the two stories the first of which is evidently the occasion of it. In 1588 he inserted the paragraph beginning: "Whereof I have often seen amusing proof," and ending, "if there be the reputation there cannot be the

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[1] In the first edition we read: "I could tell some marvellous stories about this, but for the present it is more worth while to pursue my subject." This sentence was afterward dropped.

effect"; and in 1595 the paragraph beginning "In truth," and ending with "silence."

These two added pages, interesting in themselves, are somewhat incoherent and confusing where they stand and do not well preface the stories.

In the passage regarding the education of children (chapter 26 of this Book) we have the first expression — there are many later ones — of Montaigne's thoughtful study of education; a study of its principles which caused his precepts to rank among those that no change of beliefs or fashions can impair.

THERE is no man whom it becomes so ill to undertake to speak about memory as myself. For I recognize scarcely a trace of it in myself, and I do not believe that there can be another man in the world so horribly deficient in this respect. All my other faculties are mean and ordinary; but regarding this one, I think I am exceptional and most unusual, and worthy to win name and fame thereby. I could tell some wonderful stories about this, but for the present it is more worth while to pursue my subject.[1]

(*b*) In addition to the natural troublesome consequences that I suffer because of this,— (*c*) for surely, considering its indispensableness, Plato is justified in calling memory a great and powerful goddess,[2] — (*b*) if, in my part of the world they mean that a man is lacking in intelligence, they say that he has no memory; and when I complain of the failure of mine, they correct me and disbelieve me, as if I accused myself of being unintelligent; they see no distinction between memory and understanding. This makes my case much worse. But they wrong me, for, quite to the contrary, experience shows that excellent memories are frequently found in conjunction with feeble powers of judgement. They wrong me also in this, that the same words which indicate my malady [3] stand for ingratitude — for I can do nothing else so well as be a friend. They lay the blame on my heart instead of on my memory, and of an involuntary defect they make a wilful one. "He forgets," they say, "this request or

[1] See the note on p. 40.

[2] See Plato, *Critias*, near the beginning.

[3] That is, lack of memory.

that promise; he does n't remember his friends; he did not remember to do this, or to say that, or to hold his tongue about the other, for my sake." Certainly, I can easily forget; but to be indifferent about the service my friend has asked of me, that I am not. Let them be content with my misfortune, without distorting it into a sort of ill-will, and of a kind so foreign to my disposition. I thus somewhat console myself: in the first place (*c*) because it is an evil from which I have mainly derived the argument for ridding myself of a worse evil that would easily have taken root in me—namely, ambition; for it[1] is an infirmity unendurable for him who involves himself in public affairs; also, as many like examples of nature's action show us, it has fairly strengthened other faculties in me in proportion to its own weakness; and I might otherwise readily let my intelligence follow indolently in another's footsteps, as all the world does, without exerting its own power, if foreign ideas and opinions had presented themselves to me through the medium of the memory; also, (*b*) my speech is consequently the briefer, for the storehouse of memory is easily better supplied with matter than is that of invention. (*c*) If my memory had held good, I should have deafened all my friends with my chatter, as subjects that arouse the faculty, such as it is, that I have, of handling and making use of them, and warm me up and excite me in conversation. (*b*) This is lamentable. I have tested it by the case of some of my personal friends: as memory presents the thing to their minds completely and [as it were] before their eyes, they carry their tale so far back, and load it down with so many idle details, that, if the story be a good one, they stifle its goodness; if it be not so, you curse their good fortune in their memory or their ill-fortune in their judgement. (*c*) It is a difficult thing to stop in talk, and cut it short when one has got started; and there is nothing in which a horse's strength is more manifest than in making a clean, quick stop. Even with pertinent talkers, I find some who would, but can not, stay their course: while they are seeking the effective way to conclude, they go trifling along and dragging the matter out, like men staggering from weakness. Above all, old men

[1] Lack of memory.

are in danger, who retain remembrance of past things and have lost remembrance of their twice-told stories. I have known some really amusing tales to become very tiresome in the mouth of a man of the world, every one present having heard them poured out a hundred times.

(*b*) In the second place [I am consoled[1]] because I remember less the affronts I have received, as said an ancient writer.[2] (*c*) I should have to keep a register of them; as Darius, in order not to forget the affront he had received from the Athenians, arranged that a page, every time he sat down to table, should come and repeat thrice in his ear: "Sire, remember the Athenians";[3] also, [I am consoled] (*b*) because the places and books that I see for a second time always charm me with the freshness of novelty.

(*a*) Not without reason is it said that he who does not know himself to be of sane memory should not meddle with lying. I am well aware that the grammarians[4] make a distinction between saying what is false and lying;[5] and they state that to say what is false is to say something which is untrue, but which one believes to be true, and that the definition in Latin of the word *mentiri*, from which our French word is derived, is equivalent to going against one's knowledge, and that, consequently, the word applies only to those who speak contrary to what they know; and it is to these that I refer. Now, they either invent the whole thing, or disguise and alter an actual fact. When they disguise and alter it, if they often recur to this same tale, they are likely to be embarrassed; because, the thing as it really is having been the first to become fixed in the memory, and having stamped itself there by force of outward and inward knowledge, it is very difficult not to let it present itself to the imagination, supplanting the false version, which cannot have so firm and assured a footing there; and the circumstances that one

[1] Referring back to "I thus somewhat console myself: in the first place" (page 42).

[2] See Cicero, *Oratio pro Ligurio*, XII: *Oblivisci nihil soles, nisi injurias.*

[3] See Herodotus, V, 105.

[4] See Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, IV, 2; Nigidius, in Aulus Gellius, XI, 11, and in Nonius, V, 80.

[5] *Entre dire mensonge et mentir.*

first learned about the thing, always slipping back into the mind, drive out recollection of the false, or modified, added details. When they invent altogether, inasmuch as there is no contrary impression to oppose their falsification, they seem to have so much the less reason to be afraid of making a mistake. Yet, even then, because it is a vague, bodiless thing, not easily held, it readily escapes the memory, unless it be very reliable. (*b*) Whereof I have often seen amusing proof, at the expense of those who make it their business so to frame their speech as will best serve in their negotiations, and will be agreeable to those in high station with whom they are talking; for as these circumstances to which they choose to subordinate their faith and conscience are subject to frequent changes, their language must needs be changed likewise; from which it comes about that they call the same thing now grey and now yellow; say this to one man and that to another; and if, by chance, these men bring together as common booty their so inconsistent pieces of information, what becomes of that noble art? Besides, they too often imprudently embarrass themselves; for what memory could suffice to keep in mind the multitude of different forms they have given to a single subject? I have known many of my contemporaries to envy the reputation for this noble kind of prudence, who do not see that, if there be the reputation, there cannot be the effect.

(*c*) In truth, lying is an accursed vice.[1] We are men only by speech, and are only thereby bound to one another. If we understood the horribleness and the weight of it, we should drag it to the stake more justly than other crimes. I find that people ordinarily busy themselves most ill-advisedly with punishing children for harmless mistakes, and worry them about heedless acts which leave no trace or consequence. Lying alone, and in a less degree obstinacy, seem to me to be the faults whose birth and progress we should most insistently combat; they increase with the child's growth, and when the tongue has been given this false direction, it is wonderful how impossible it is to turn it. Whence it comes about that we see those who are otherwise excellent

[1] Cf. *infra*, Book II, chap. 18 ("Of Lying"): *C'est un vilain vice que le mentir.*

men subject to this fault and enslaved by it. I have a nice fellow of a tailor whom I never hear tell the truth, not even when it would be useful to him. If falsehood, like truth, had but one face, we should be better off, for we should take for certain the contrary of what the liar said. But the opposite of truth has a hundred thousand shapes and a limitless field. The Pythagoreans regard good as certain and definite, evil as indefinite and uncertain. A thousand roads lead away from the goal, one leads to it. Certainly I am not sure that I could induce myself to ward off an obvious and extreme danger by a brazen and deliberate lie.

An ancient father says that we are better off in the company of a dog we know than in that of a man whose language is unknown.[1] *Ut externus alieno non sit hominis vice.*[2] And how much less companionable is untruthful speech than silence! (*a*) King Francis the First boasted of having completely bewildered[3] by means of this sort of performance, Francisco Taverna, ambassador of Francisco Sforza, Duke of Milan — a man of great reputation in the art of speech-making. He had been despatched to carry his master's excuses to His Majesty in regard to a very important matter, which was this. The king, in order to have always some sources of information in Italy, whence he had recently been driven, especially in the Duchy of Milan, had arranged to keep at the duke's court a gentleman of his own, an ambassador in fact, but in appearance a private individual, who had the air of being there for his own affairs; all the more because the duke, who was much more bound to the emperor, — just then especially, when he was negotiating a marriage with his niece, the daughter of the King of Denmark, now Duchess Dowager of Lorraine, — could not openly have any relations or communication with us without prejudice to himself. For this office a Milanese gentleman was thought fit — one of the king's equerries, named Merveille. He, being despatched with secret credentials and instructions as ambassador, and with letters of recommen-

[1] See St. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, XIX, 7.

[2] So that those of different nations do not regard each other as men. — Pliny, *Natural History*, VII, 1.

[3] *D'avoir mis au rouet.*

dation to the duke bearing upon his private concerns, — as a cloak and for show, — remained so long at the ducal court that the emperor somewhat resented it, which, we believe, was the cause of what happened afterward, which was this: that, on the pretext of some murder or other, lo and behold, the duke had Merveille's head cut off one fine night, his trial having been carried through in two days. Messire Francisco,[1] having come all primed with a long, distorted version of this affair (for the king, demanding satisfaction, had addressed himself to all the princes of Christendom, and especially to the duke), was received in audience one morning; and having prepared and laid down as the basis of his plea several plausible versions of the facts: that his master had never regarded our man as anything more than a private individual and a subject of his own, who had come to Milan for his private affairs and had never lived there in any other character; [the duke] denying even that he had been aware that he was of the king's household, or known to him — very far, indeed, from taking him to be an ambassador; the king, in his turn, pressing him [1] hard with objections and questions, and attacking him on all sides, cornered him at last on the point of the execution by night and in secret. To which the poor embarrassed man replied, to show courtesy, that out of respect for His Majesty, the duke would have been very sorry to have such an execution take place by day.[2] It can be imagined how he was brought to book, having so stupidly contradicted himself, and in presence of so keen a scent as King Francis had.

Pope Julius the Second having sent an ambassador to the King of England, to incite him against King Francis, when the ambassador had been heard concerning his mission, and the King of England in his reply had dwelt on the difficulties he should encounter in making the necessary preparations to go to war against so powerful a monarch, and had alleged certain reasons [for these conditions], the ambassador ill-advisedly rejoined that he too had considered them and had stated them to the Pope. From this remark, so far removed from the original proposal, which was to urge him

[1] Taverna.

[2] See du Bellay, IV (an. 1533).

forthwith into war, the King of England derived the first hint of what he afterwards found to be the fact — that this ambassador was privily inclined to the side of France; and having advised his master of that fact, his property was confiscated and he was very near losing his life.[1]

CHAPTER X

OF READINESS OR UNREADINESS OF SPEECH

As we turn the pages of this volume of the Essays, more and more we slip into the mood of *conversation*. Montaigne is *talking* to us, and soon we are so interested that we find ourselves answering him, discussing with him, and perhaps not listening to him, because we are thinking of what he *has* said or what he *may* say.

The peculiar interest of these few pages is that Montaigne here treats not only in general of the subject in hand, but incidentally of his own nature in relation to it. The Essay opens with the remark that some men are always ready for eloquent speech while others need time and preparation. As it is chiefly preachers and lawyers who have need of eloquence, it seems to Montaigne that the slow-witted would make the best preachers, and the quick-witted the best lawyers; and he alleges reasons for this belief, and tells as comment on it a story of a famous lawyer of the day. In France, at least, there are more able lawyers than preachers, he thinks. But he who can say nothing without preparation, and he who speaks none the better for having plenty of time *sont en pareil degrê*. Severus Cassius was said to speak best when suddenly called upon. Here our attention is caught by the words (printed in 1580): "I know by experience that inborn disposition which cannot sustain eager and laborious premeditation."

He goes on to speak of works that "smell of the oil and the lamp," and remarks that eagerness to do well hinders the outpouring of the soul, like water when pressing against too small an outlet. This is the effect of all strong passions; the soul must be "solicited," not "shaken"; but it must be moved; "excitement is its life and is favourable to it." He says gaily of himself that his talk is worth more than his writings, "if there can be a choice where there is nothing of value"; and the talk ends with a delightful laugh over his confession of those *subtilitês* that he now and again loses so well, that he can never discover their meaning himself. It is self-evident that this last paragraph was one of the passages added in 1595.

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[1] Probably taken by Montaigne from the *Apologie pour Hérodote* (XV, 24) of H. Estienne, who translated it from Erasmus, *De Lingua*.

Onc ne furent à tous toutes graces données.[1]

THUS we see that, in the gift of eloquence, some have facility and readiness, and, as they say, the tongue so well oiled,[2] that they are ready at every turn; others, less ready, never say any thing they have not thought out and elaborated. As rules are given to ladies for pursuing those games and bodily exercises which give advantage to their finest points, so, if I had to advise on similar lines in respect to these two different merits of eloquence, to which it would seem, in our time, that preachers and lawyers principally lay claim, the unready man would make the better preacher, it seems to me, and the other the better lawyer; for the reason that the profession of the former gives him as much leisure as he desires to prepare himself, and, moreover, his discourse[3] flows smoothly on, without interruption; whereas the exigencies of the advocate's profession force him to enter the lists at any moment; and the unforeseen rejoinders of his opponent throw him out of his stride; so that he must needs take a new start on the instant. And yet, at the interview between Pope Clement and King Francis at Marseilles it happened, quite contrariwise, that Monsieur Poyet, a man who had passed his whole life at the bar and had a great reputation, having it in charge to make the harangue to the Pope, when he had long meditated upon it, — indeed, it was said that he had brought it from Paris all prepared, — the Pope, fearing lest something might be said to him which would offend the ambassadors of the other princes, who were in attendance upon him, sent to the king the argument which seemed to him most suited to the time and place. But it, by chance, was altogether different from that over which Monsieur Poyet had laboured; so that his harangue became useless, and it was necessary for him to compose another at once. But as he felt that he was incapable of doing this, Monsieur le Cardinal du Bellay had to undertake the duty.[4] (*b*) The lawyer's art is more difficult than the preacher's, and yet we

[1] Never were all graces given to any man. — La Boëtie.
[2] *Le boute-hors si aisé.* [3] *Carrière.*
[4] See du Bellay, IV.

find, in my opinion, more passable lawyers than preachers, at least in France.

(*a*) It would seem that it is more a characteristic of the wit to be ready and quick in operation, and more a characteristic of the judgement to be slow and sedate. But he who remains altogether dumb if he has no leisure to prepare himself, and he to whom leisure is of no help to better speech, are equally singular. It is said of Severus Cassius that he discoursed better without preparation; that he owed more to good fortune than to diligence; that it was an advantage to him to be disturbed when speaking, and that his opponents were afraid to harass him, lest wrath should increase his eloquence twofold.[1] I know by experience that inborn disposition which cannot sustain eager and laborious premeditation; if it does not move joyously and freely, it does nothing that is worth while.[2] We say of some works that they smell of the oil and the lamp, because of a certain harshness and roughness which labour imparts to those in which it has a large share; but, in addition to that, the anxiety to do well, and the struggling of the mind too constrained and too intent upon its undertaking, bewilder it, interrupt and impede it, (*b*) as happens to water, which, by force of pressure from its violence and abundance, cannot vent itself in an open sluice. (*a*) In this sort of nature of which I am speaking, there is also, at the same time, this peculiarity, that it demands not to be set in motion and spurred on by strong passions, like the anger of Cassius (for that impulsion would be too violent); it requires not to be shaken, but to be solicited; it requires to be kindled and aroused by outward circumstances, immediate and accidental. If it moves by itself, it does but drag along and hang fire. Excitement is its life and is favourable to it.

(*b*) I do not well hold myself in my own possession and at my own disposition; chance has more to say therein

[1] See Seneca (the Rhetorician), *Controversiæ*, III, Pref.

[2] In the editions previous to 1588 this sentence read thus: *Je cognois bien privement et par ordinaire experience, ceste condition de nature qui ne peut soustenir une vehemente premeditation, tant pour le defaut de la memoire et difficultê du chois des choses et de leur disposition, que pour le trouble qu'une attention vehemente luy apporte d'ailleurs.*

than I. The occasion, the company, the very sound of my voice, draws from my mind more than I find there when I sound it and use it when alone. Thus my spoken words are worth more than my written ones, if there can be a choice where there is nothing of value. (*c*) This also happens to me, that I do not find myself where I seek for myself, and I find myself more by chance than by my judgement's investigation. I may have thrown off some subtle conceit in writing (I mean one that is pointless to others, but in my eyes well-sharpened; let us be permitted such sincerities; every one says such things according as he can); I have lost it so completely that I do not know what I meant to say; and sometimes an outsider has discovered the meaning before I have. If I should erase every thing where this happens to me, I should destroy all. Chance, at another time, will throw a light on it for me clearer than that of noon-day, and will make me wonder at my hesitation.

CHAPTER XI

OF PROGNOSTICATIONS

In writing of "prognostications" Montaigne foreruns Bacon in the belief that (in Bacon's words), "They ought all to be despised, and ought to serve but for winter talk by the fireside."

The story of the Marquis de Salluce was the occasion of this Essay, and was originally almost the whole of it; the page that precedes it only gives the reasons why it seemed to Montaigne remarkable; and the verses of Horace brought the Essay to a close in 1580.

In 1588 the next sentence (dropped in 1595) was: "I should much prefer to manage my affairs by the cast of dice than by such dreams"; and it was followed by the paragraph beginning: "I see some who annotate their almanacs." After the sentence, "There would be more certainty . . ." came the remark (afterward somewhat changed): "I have seen sometimes to their hurt . . ." Then came immediately: "The Demon of Socrates," and the Essay ended as now.

In 1595 the Latin quotations of the first page were, all but one, added; also two immediately following the Horace quotation, and the paragraph about the Tuscans and that about Plato. A line or two after, another Latin citation. Again a line or two, and the story of Diagoras and the saying of Cicero were inserted. Before "The demon of Socrates" were pushed in the books of Joachim and Leon and the remarks that follow.

This sketch gives an idea of the sometimes unfortunate and often confusing changes the Essays underwent from the many additions at various times. They render them not simple growths, but complicated agglomerations.

AS to oracles, it is certain that a good while before the coming of Jesus Christ they had begun to be discredited; for we see Cicero trying to find out the cause of their failure. (*c*) And these are his words: *Cur isto modo jam oracula Delphis non eduntur non modo nostra ætate sed jamdiu, ut modo nihil possit esse contemptius?* [1] (*a*) But as for the other prognostics which were derived at sacrifices from the anatomy of animals, (*c*) to which Plato [2] ascribes in part the natural structure of their internal organs, (*a*) from the quick motions [3] of chickens, or the flight of birds, (*c*) *aves quasdam rerum augurandarum causa natas esse putamus*),[4] (*a*) from thunder and lightning, from the overflow of rivers; (*c*) *multa cernunt aruspices, multa augures provident, multa oraculis declarantur, multa vaticinationibus, multa somniis, multa portentis;* [5] (*a*) and other things upon which antiquity based most of its undertakings, both public and private — our religion has done away with them. And although there still remain among us certain methods of divination, by the stars, by spirits, by ghosts, by dreams, and otherwise, — a notable example of the senseless curiosity of our nature, occupying itself with future matters, as if it had not enough to do in digesting those at hand, —

(*b*) cur hanc tibi, rector Olympi,
Sollicitis visum mortalibus addere curam,
Noscant venturas ut dira per omina clades?
. . . . . .

[1] Why is it that oracles of such a sort not only are not uttered at Delphi in our time, but have not been given out for some time past, so that nothing could be more contemptible? — Cicero, *De Divin.*, II, 57.

[2] In the *Timæus.* [3] *Trepignement.*

[4] We hold that certain birds were purposely created to be used in the art of augury. — Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.*, II, 64.

[5] Many things the soothsayers discern; many the augurs foresee; many are announced by oracles, many by prophecies, many by dreams, many by portents. — *Ibid.*, II, 65.

Sit subitum quodcunque paras, sit cæca futuri
Mens hominum fati; liceat sperare timenti,[1] —

(*c*) *Ne utile quidem est scire quid futurum sit; miserum est enim nihil proficientem angi*,[2] (*a*) still, it [3] is of much less authority [than formerly]. This is why the instance of Francis, Marquis de Sallusse, has seemed to me worthy of note.[4] For while he was lieutenant of King Francis in his army on the other side of the mountains,[5] and was in highest favour at our court and indebted to the king for the marquisate, which had been confiscated from his brother, there being indeed no occasion for him to do this,[6] — his inclination even pointing the other way, — he allowed himself to be so terrified, so it has been asserted, by the fine prognostications that were then current on all sides to the advantage of the Emperor Charles the Fifth and to our disadvantage (even in Italy, where those absurd prophecies had gained so much credence that in Rome a large sum of money changed hands on account of the belief in our downfall) that, after frequently lamenting with his intimates the disasters which he saw to be inevitably in store for the crown of France and for his friends there, he rebelled and changed his allegiance — to his great harm, however, whatever constellation was in the sky. But he behaved like a man torn by conflicting passions; for, having both cities and troops under his command, and the hostile army, under Antonio de Leyva, being close at hand (and we unsuspicious of what he was about), he might have done much worse than he did; for by his treachery we lost neither man nor town, except Fossan, and that only after a long struggle.

[1] Why did it please thee, ruler of Olympus, to add another care to anxious mortals, that through boding omens they know the calamities that are to come? . . . Be it sudden, whatever thou dost prepare; let men's minds be blind to the future; let the timid man still hope. — Lucan, II, 4–6, 14, 15.

[2] It is no advantage to know the future; for it is a wretched thing to suffer suspense all to no purpose. — Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.*, III, 6.

[3] That is, divination.

[4] See du Bellay, VI; de Thou, I, 37.

[5] In Italy.

[6] That is, to rebel and change his allegiance. See below.

Prudens futuri temporis exitum
Caliginosa nocte premit Deus
Ridetque, si mortalis ultra
Fas trepidat

. . . . . .

Ille potens sui
Lætusque deget, cui licet in diem
Dixisse, vixi, cras vel atra
Nube polum pater occupato
Vel sole puro.[1]

Lætus in præsens animus quod ultra est,
Oderit curare.[2]

(*c*) And, on the other hand, they who believe the following statement, believe it mistakenly: *Ista sic reciprocantur, ut et, si divinatio sit, dii sint; et, si dii sint, sit divinatio.*[3] Much more wisely Pacuvius says: —

Nam istis qui linguam avium intelligunt,
Plusque ex alieno jecore sapiunt quam ex suo,
Magis audiendum quam auscultandum censeo.[4]

The Tuscans' celebrated art of divination originated thus: A ploughman, driving his plough deep, saw Tages rise out of the earth [5] — a demigod with the face of a child but an old man's wisdom. Every one hastened to the place, and his words and his learning, embodying the principles and processes of this art, were collected and preserved for many centuries. An origin consonant with its growth. (*b*) I should

[1] A wise god conceals in thick darkness the outcome of the future, and laughs if some mortal is more alarmed than he should be. . . . He will be master of himself and happy, who can say each day, "I have lived; to-morrow let the father cover the heavens with a dark cloud or with pure sunshine." — Horace, *Odes*, III, 29.29–32, 41–45.

[2] The mind happy in the present shuns all thought of the future. — *Ibid.*, II, 16.25. The Essay ended here in the early editions.

[3] Thus the argument is converted: If there be an art of divination, there are gods; and if there be gods, there is an art of divination. — Cicero, *De Divin.*, I, 6.

[4] As for those who understand the language of birds and learn more from the liver of a beast than from their own thought, they should be heard, I think, rather than heeded. — *Ibid.*, I, 57.

[5] See *Ibid.*, II, 23.

much prefer to manage my affairs by the cast of the dice than by such dreams. (*c*) And, in truth, in all republics, a large share of authority has always been ascribed to the drawing of lots. Plato, in the laws of government which he makes as pleases him, entrusts to it the decision of numerous matters of importance,[1] and decrees, among other things, that marriages between the good shall be arranged by lot; and he attributes so much weight to this chance selection, that he decrees that children born from it shall be brought up within the country, and that those born from ill-assorted unions shall be sent away; but if one of those banished [2] should by any chance, as he grew up, manifest some hopeful indications of worth, let him be recalled; and also let any one of those originally retained be expelled who during his adolescence manifests little that is hopeful.

(*b*) I see some who study and annotate their almanacs, and hold them up to us as authority about things that are taking place. Saying so much, they must needs say what is truth and what falsehood. (*c*) *Quis est enim, qui, totum diem jaculans, non aliquando collineet.*[3] (*b*) I think no better of them because I see them sometimes make a lucky hit. There would be more certainty and truth if it were the rule always to lie.[4] (*c*) It may be added that no one keeps a record of their miscalculations,[5] as they are of common occurrence and endless; and every one ranks their true prognostics as remarkable, incredible, and prodigious. Witness the answer of Diagoras, to whom, when he was in Samothrace, some one pointed out in the temple many votive offerings and pictures of those who had been rescued from shipwreck, saying: "Look, you who believe that the gods are indifferent to human affairs — what say you to so many men saved by their mercy?" — "I say this," he replied: "those who have been drowned, a far greater number, have not been painted."[6]

[1] See the *Timæus*, and the *Republic*, book V.

[2] See the *Republic*, book V. Plato does not say "banished," but "secretly dispersed among the other citizens."

[3] Who can shoot all day and not sometimes hit the mark? — Cicero, *De Divin.*, II, 59.

[4] *Ce seroit plus de certitude, s'il y avoit regle et verité a mentir tousjours.*

[5] Those of the almanac students.

[6] See Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.*, I, 37.

Cicero says that Xenophanes the Colophonian alone of all the philosophers who acknowledged the existence of the gods, tried to uproot every kind of divination.[1] It is in so much the less strange if we have seen sometimes, to their hurt, some of our princely personages dally with these vanities.

I should greatly like to have beheld with my own eyes those two marvels — the book of Joachim, the Calabrian abbot,[2] who predicted all the popes to come, their names and persons; and that of the Emperor Leo,[3] who predicted the emperors and patriarchs of Greece. This I have seen with my own eyes, that, in times of public confusion, men amazed by what happens to them fall back, as into other forms of superstition, into seeking in the heavens the causes and past threatenings of their ill-fortune; and they are so strangely lucky at it in my time that they have convinced me that, inasmuch as it is an occupation for keen and idle minds, those who are trained to this subtle art of knotting and unknotting these signs would be capable of finding in any writings whatever they sought therein. But what above all helps them in this game is the obscure, ambiguous, and fantastic language of the prophetical jargon, to which those who use it give no clear sense, so that posterity may ascribe to it any meaning it pleases.[4] (*b*) The Demon of Socrates was, perhaps, a certain impulse from the will, which moved him without awaiting the concurrence of his reason. In a mind so purified as his, and so prepared by the continuous practice of wisdom and virtue, it is probable that those impressions, although unexpected and formless, were always important and worthy of being followed. Every man feels within himself some likeness to such emotions, (*c*) of a quick, vehement, and haphazard judgement.[5] I can but give these some weight, who give so little weight to our sagacity; (*b*) and I have had some (*c*) equally weak in common sense

[1] *De Divin.*, I, 3.

[2] A.D. 1130–1202.

[3] Leo VI, the Philosopher, A.D. 865–911. See Chalcondylas (tr. Vigenère), I, 8.

[4] On the intentional obscurity of the seers, see Cicero, *De Divin.*, II, 54, 56.

[5] *Opinion prompte, vehemente et fortuite.*

and vehement in persuasion, — or in dissuasion, which were more usual in Socrates, — (*b*) by which I have allowed myself to be guided so profitably and fortunately, that they might be judged to contain something of divine inspiration.

CHAPTER XII

OF STEADINESS

This Essay was built up from the two examples of escape from danger which made the whole of it in 1580.

The second and third paragraphs, the one beginning "Many very warlike nations," and the other "Regarding the Scythians," were inserted in 1595, and break the continuity of thought.

The last sentence was added in 1588, and is one of the indications of Montaigne's experience as a soldier.

THE rule of firmness and steadiness does not require that we should not protect ourselves, so far as is in our power, from the evils and misfortunes which threaten us, nor, consequently, from the fear of their taking us by surprise. On the contrary, all honourable means of securing ourselves from harm are not only permissible, but praiseworthy. And the character of steadiness is shown [1] mainly by bearing patiently and unshaken the misfortunes for which there is no remedy; so that there is no agility, no motion, which, when armed, we should think ill of, if it serves to ward off the blow about to crush us.

(*c*) Many very warlike nations use flight in their encounters as their chief means of advantage, and show their backs with more danger to their enemies than their faces. The Turks retain something of this habit, and Socrates, in Plato,[2] makes sport of Laches, who had defined fortitude, "to stand fast in one's place against the foe." — "What," he says, "would it be cowardice, then, to beat them by giving way?" And he cites Homer, who praises Æneas for skill in flight. And because Laches, on further consideration, admits the existence of such a custom among the Scythians, and indeed generally among all peoples that fight on horseback, he cites further the example of the Lacedæmonian

[1] *Et le jeu de la constance se joue.* [2] See *Laches*.

foot-soldiers (the nation especially trained to fight shoulder to shoulder[1]), who, on the day of Platæa, being unable to break into the Persian phalanx, decided to scatter and fall back, so that, by having it believed that they had fled, they might cause that mass to break and melt away in pursuing; by which means they obtained the victory.

Regarding the Scythians, it is said that, when Darius set forth to subjugate them, he sent to their king many reproaches because he found him always falling back and avoiding an encounter. To which Indathyrses (for so he was named) replied, that it was not because he was afraid of him or of any man alive; but that it was his nation's way of fighting, as they had neither tilled fields, nor cities, nor houses to defend, and had not to fear that the enemy could make any profit from these; but if he was so hungry for a taste of them, let him come to look at their ancient places of burial, and he would find his fill of people to talk to.[2]

(*a*) None the less, in a cannonade, when one is directly exposed to it, as the hazards of war often bring about, it is unbecoming to start at the threat of the shot, since, by reason of its impetus and speed, we know it to be inescapable; and there is many a man who, by lifting his hand or lowering his head, has at least given his comrades ground for laughter. Yet it is true that on the Emperor Charles the Fifth's expedition against us in Provence,[3] the Marquis de Guast, having gone to reconnoitre the town of Arles, and having stepped out from the shelter of a windmill under cover of which he had approached, was espied by the Seigneur de Bonneval and the Seneschal of Agenois, who were walking on the walls of the amphitheatre.[4] They having pointed him out to the Seigneur de Villier, commissary of artillery, he aimed a culverin at him so exactly at the right moment that, if the said marquis, seeing him light the match, had not jumped aside, it was thought certain that he would have been hit. And likewise, a few years earlier, when Lorenzo de Medicis, Duke of Urbino, father of the Queen-Mother,[5] was besieging Mon-

[1] *De pied ferme.*

[2] See Herodotus, IV, 126, 127.

[3] In the invasion of 1536. See du Bellay, VII.

[4] *Sus le theatre aux arenes.*

[5] Catherine de Medicis, widow of Henri II, and mother of François II, Charles IX, and Henri III. See Guicciardini, XIII.

dolpho, a fortified place in Italy, in the region called the Vicariate, seeing the match touched to a gun aimed in his direction, it was well that he ducked,[1] for otherwise the ball, which merely grazed the top of his head, would doubtless have hit him in the stomach. To say the truth, I do not believe that such motions are made with intention; for what judgement can you form as to high or low aim in so sudden a matter? And it is much easier to believe that fortune smiled upon their fright, and that another time such action would be quite as likely to throw them in front of the blow as to avoid it. (*b*) If the flashing report of a musket strikes my ears without warning, in a place where I have no reason to expect it, I can not help starting violently — which I have seen happen to others who are better men than I. (*c*) Nor do the Stoics [2] hold that the soul of their sage can resist the first visions and fancies that occur to him; rather, they admit that from a natural subjection he may be affected by a loud noise in the sky, or of a falling building, for example, to the point of pallor and paralysis, as well as to other expressions of emotion, provided that his thought remains entrenched and whole, and that the seat of his judgement suffers no injury or change, and that he gives no countenance to his fright and suspense. With him who is no sage, it is the same as to the first point, but altogether different as to the second. For in him the impression of perturbations is not superficial, but penetrates to the seat of his reason, infecting and corrupting it; he judges according to them and adapts himself to them. See the state of the Stoic sage well and fully set forth: —

Mens immota manet; lacrimæ volvuntur inanes.[3]

The Peripatetic sage is not free from agitations, but he governs them.

[1] *Bien luy servit de faire le cane.*

[2] This passage (to the end of the chapter), added after 1588, is a close imitation of Aulus Gellius, XIX, 1. But Montaigne probably took it from the summary given by St. Augustine in *De Civ. Dei*, IX, 4, where the verse of Virgil also is found.

[3] His mind remains unshaken; useless are her flowing tears. — Virgil, *Æneid*, IV, 449.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CEREMONY AT INTERVIEWS OF KINGS

All subjects belong to conversation, and so all matters may be touched upon in these Essays. Montaigne recognises this, and also that the topic he now takes up is not a very interesting one, when he says: "There is no subject so trivial as not to deserve a place in this medley" — this collection of fragments. It is of royal ceremonies and of courtesies among "the great" that he talks. He had just been reading Guicciardini, and the account of the meeting of the Pope and emperor at Boulogne, in 1532, had entertained him and so he transported it to his own pages.

In 1562 there was published *Anales et croniques de France depuis la destruction de Troyes jusques au temps des roy Louis onzieme*, with additions bringing it down to the year of publication. The first part was composed by "feu maistre Nicolle Gilles," who had been "secrettaire iudiciaire du Roy, et controlleur de son tresor." Montaigne owned a copy of this volume and made in it some hundred and seventy annotations. It became in our day the property of the well-known Montaigne scholar, M. Dezeimeris, who has published an elaborate study of it.

Among many other indications that Montaigne may have had it occasionally in mind when writing, M. Dezeimeris suggests that a passage in the additions, "De l'entree de l'empereur et son fils, Roy des Romains [Charles] en la ville de Paris," might have been the occasion of this Essay.

The last paragraph was added in 1595.

The little personal touch, "For my part . . . I do away with all ceremony," was inserted in 1588, and was changed in 1595 to "so far as I can."

In a later Essay ("Of Vanity," Book III, chapter 9) Montaigne says: "There is more of heartbreak than of consolation in taking leave of one's friends [when setting out on a journey]; I willingly forget this duty of our manners"; a detail of the feeling expressed earlier here.

THERE is no subject so trivial as not to deserve a place in this medley.[1] According to our ordinary conventions, it would be a signal discourtesy, both to an equal and even more to a great man, to fail to be at home when he had notified you that he was about to come to your house. Indeed, Queen Marguerite of Navarre went further and said, on this subject, that it is uncivil for a gentleman to leave his house, as is most often

[1] *Rapsodie.*

done, and go forth to meet the person who is coming to visit him, however great a man he may be; and that it is more respectful and civil to wait at home to receive him, were it only for fear of missing him on the road; and that it is enough to accompany him on his departure. (*b*) For my own part, I often forget both one and the other of these idle civilities, as in my own house I do away with all ceremony so far as I can. If some one should take offence, what matters it to me? It is better to offend him once than myself every day: that would be a never-ending subjection. To what end do we shun the servitude of courts, if we bring it into our own lair? [1]

(*a*) It is also a common rule in all gatherings that it is for the inferior persons to be first at the place appointed, since it is more fitting that the greater should be waited for. And yet at the interview which was arranged between Pope Clement [2] and King Francis at Marseilles, the king, having ordered the necessary preparations, left the city and gave the Pope two or three days of leisure, to make his entry and recreate himself before meeting him. And in like manner, at the entry of the same Pope and the emperor [3] into Bologna, the emperor gave the Pope opportunity to be there first, and arrived after him. It is, they say, a common ceremonial at the conferences of princes, that the greatest should arrive before the others at the place assigned, even before him in whose country the meeting is held; and they look at it in this way: [4] that it is because this arrangement testifies that the inferiors go to find the greatest, and seek him, not he them.

(*c*) Not only every country, but every city and every profession has its special code of manners. I was trained carefully enough in my childhood, and have lived in sufficiently good society, not to be ignorant of the laws of our French manners; and I might teach them. I like to follow them, but not so slavishly that my life is constrained by them.

[1] *Si on l'en traine jusques en sa taniere.*

[2] Clement VII. The same interview was referred to in chap. 10, *supra*, page 48. See du Bellay, IV.

[3] Charles V. It was in 1532. See Guicciardini, XIX, 6.

[4] *Le prennent de ce biais.*

They have some troublesome forms, which if we forget discreetly and not erroneously, we suffer no loss of grace. I have often seen men uncivil through over-civility, and importunate out of courtesy. After all, the art of social tact[1] is a very useful art. Like grace and beauty, it conciliates the approaches of sociability and familiarity, and consequently opens the way for us to instruct ourselves by the examples of others, and to put into execution and make visible our own example, if there be in it any thing instructive and communicable.

CHAPTER XIV

THAT THE SAVOUR OF GOODS AND ILLS DEPENDS IN LARGE PART ON THE IDEA THAT WE HAVE OF THEM[2]

This title reminds one of Hamlet's saying, "There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so."

The opening sentence enlarges and defines the meaning of the title, and then Montaigne goes on to question whether this be true: let us see if this can be maintained.

He thinks that one proof that it is true is the difference of the ideas of different men about death: by one it is regarded as the most horrible of things, by another as the sovereign good of nature. As one way of meeting death he instances the many jokes that have been uttered by persons on their way to execution; as another, the women who bury or burn themselves with the dead bodies of their husbands, or the self-destruction of men and women in time of war or political trouble. (Here he tells a striking fact that he had learned from his father.) Then follows an inserted passage about the Jews in Portugal — from whom Montaigne's mother was descended, which fact perhaps made their history the more interesting to him.

He then tells the story of Pyrrho pointing out in a storm at sea, for the emulation of his companions, the composure of a pig; and Montaigne questions whether we do not ill employ the intelligence that has been given us for our greatest good, in struggling against the universal order of things. *L'universel ordre des choses* — we have here, as has been remarked,[3] one of the *Leit-motives* of Montaigne's thought.

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[1] *La science de l'entregent.*

[2] In the edition of 1595, this chapter became Chapter 40, and the numbers of all the intervening chapters were changed accordingly. Not until Chapter 41 is the numbering the same in all editions.

[3] M. F. Strowski, *Montaigne* (1906), p. 31.

The Essayist now contemplates the other ills of human life. "Very good," you will answer; "your precept is well enough for death: but what will you say of poverty? and what of pain?" He answers that with regard to pain, "Here it is not all imagination. . . . I grant that it is the worst mischance of our being," and that poverty is to be dreaded — but dreaded only — because it throws us into the arms of pain, by hunger and cold, thirst and heat. He says that to himself the idea of pain is terrible, "there is no man on earth who shuns it as much as I."

A striking example occurs in just these pages of the self-contradictions not infrequent in the Essays, and which are due to the different passages being written at different periods of Montaigne's life and then joined together as if they were consecutive in thought as well as in position. He says, "I find *by experience* that it is chiefly the unendurableness [*l'impatience*] of the thought of death that makes pain unendurable to us." In the next paragraph we read: "I have not had, thanks be to God, *much familiarity* with it [pain]." The first sentence was written after the second one. His sufferings from the stone (what he calls "the colic") did not begin till 1573, and the greater part of the Essay we are considering was written somewhere about 1572. The sentence regarding his "experience" of pain did not appear till 1595, three years after his death, and during the last twenty years of his life he suffered greatly and frequently.

It is extremely interesting to remember in this connection that the daily records made by his secretary when travelling with him give proof that Montaigne's endurance of pain was singularly heroic.

If we cannot annihilate pain, we can diminish it by patience. So he thought in 1580; so he proved in later years. Besides, if there were not pain to be defied, how should we give evidence of courage, strength, and resolution? Again, pain can not be at once violent and long.

(This strange assertion is a striking testimony to the increased power that medicine and surgery have acquired to preserve life even in conditions of great suffering. And Montaigne seems quite to forget the result of great natural strength of constitution. His contemporary Brantôme describes himself as stretched on his bed for four years in torture, in consequence of being crushed by his horse falling upon him.)

In a passage added in his last years he reaches the assurance that the soul cannot bring into harmony with herself "the perceptions of the body and all other external things"; and that it behoves us to "arouse her all-powerful springs."

He combats in an obscure sentence an opinion thus expressed by Plato in the "Phaedo" (Jowett's translation):

"The soul of the true philosopher abstains from pleasures and desires and pains and fears, as far as she is able; . . . because each pleasure and pain is a sort of nail which nails and rivets the soul to the body, and engrosses her and makes her believe that to be true which the body affirms to be true; and from agreeing with the body and having the same delights she is obliged to have the same habits and ways." Montaigne says, No: in yielding to pain and pleasure we rather disunite the

body and the soul — and (as I understand him) remove ourselves from the government of the body by the soul, which makes our greatest comfort. But this view finds a pseudo-contradiction in an opinion expressed just before, to the effect, seemingly, that the soul would do well to let the body entirely alone.

Then in his favorite fashion, he cites examples: the endurance of the pains of child-birth; the constancy of Lacedæmonian children; the fortitude of Mucius Scævola: the contempt of pain that women show in the pursuit of beauty; the wounds given as pledges of good faith — in which connection he tells of an incident he had witnessed, about which we may wonder whether it had any personal interest for him; and the self-inflicted tortures of pious and fanatic souls — which he himself had seen often. Then comes an inserted passage of instances of composure at death of friends and children, where occurs one of the personal expressions which have been foolishly misjudged. He says that he has borne the loss of two or three of his children, who died when babies, not without regret, but without *fascherie;* that is, without grief, distress (the meaning of the word in his day).[1] And he adds that while by the greater number and the most healthy-minded among men it is considered that to have many children is a great good fortune, "I and some others consider the lack of them good fortune." We may well believe that this feeling originated in part from the disastrous condition of public affairs in that age — one of the most tragic in history. Montaigne could meet them himself with equanimity, but he recognised the manifold sufferings of every kind which they caused to countless individuals. Childless parents were to be congratulated.

All this shows that, as Cicero said, "the source of suffering is not in the nature of things but in our opinion of them."

If our opinion may make us disregard what is commonly counted as evil, so, on the other hand, it may enhance the value of good. And (after a rather incoherent and difficult page added many years later) he proceeds to show this by his own example in relation to the use of his property, through diffuse and wandering pages, concluding finally: "Affluence then and indigence depend on each man's opinion."

His last word is that among all the reasons for despising death and enduring pain there must be some which each man can accept. If not, "What can be done for him who has no courage to support either death or life?"

It may be observed that Montaigne borrowed much in this Essay from Seneca, especially from Epistle 78.

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[1] An illustration of such use may be quoted from a contemporary writer, Pierre de Changy: "Homere recite d'Hector qui previt la cité de Troye devoir estre enflammée et destruicte, n'avoir eu telle anxieté et fasherie de pere, mere, freres, parens et pays, qu'il eut de sa femme." (Translation of a Latin work of Vivès, 1442.)

M. Strowski, writing of the *neo-stoicisme* of the sixteenth century, remarks: "Ce mot de *facherie*, tant reproché à Montaigne, a un sens strict dans la langue de ce neo-stoicisme; Du Vair fait de la *facherie* une des passions de l'âme."

AN old Greek proverb says that men are afflicted by their ideas of things, not by the things themselves.[1] There would be a great point gained for the solace of our miserable mortal state if some one could prove this proposition to be always true; for if the ills of life enter into us only through our judgement, it would seem to be in our power to despise them or to turn them to good. If things are surrendered to us, why should we not make use of them, or adapt them to our benefit? If that which we call evil and affliction is neither evil nor affliction in itself, but our imagination alone gives it that character, it is in our power to change it; and having the choice, if nothing compels us, we are strangely unwise to exert ourselves for the side which is most painful for us,[2] and to give to disease, poverty, and contumely a bitter and bad taste if we can give them a good one, and if, fortune simply supplying matter, it is for us to give it shape. Now, that what we call evil is not so in itself, or, at least, whatever it may be, that it depends on us to give it another savour and another aspect, — for it all comes to the same thing, — let us see if this can be maintained.

If the primal nature of these things that we dread had power to lodge in us of its own authority, it would have the same power in all; for men are all of one species, and, save as regards the more and the less, they are supplied with the same tools and instruments for conceiving and judging. But the diversity of our opinions concerning these things shows clearly that they enter into us only as we accept them:[3] one man, it may be, holds them in himself in their true character, but a thousand others give them in their minds a new and different character. We regard death, poverty, and pain as our chief enemies. Now this death, which some call the most horrible of horrible things — who does not know that others call it the only haven from the tempests of this life, the

[1] Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, 10. Montaigne probably took it from Stobæus, *Sermon* 117. This proverb — Ταράσσει τοὺς ἀνθρώπους οὐ τὰ πράγματα, ἀλλὰ τὰ περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων δόγματα — was inscribed in Greek on one of the beams of Montaigne's library.

[2] *De nous bander pour le party qui nous est le plus ennuyeux.*

[3] *Elles n'entrent en nous que par composition.*

sovereign benefaction of nature, the sole stay of our liberty, and the universal and speedy remedy for all ills.[1] And as some await it in fear and trembling, others endure it more easily than life. (*b*) This man laments its easy attainment: —

> Mors utinam pavidos vita subducere nolles,
> Sed virtus te sola daret.[2]

(*c*) Now let us have done with this vainglorious valour. Theodorus replied to Lysimachus who threatened to kill him: "You will perform a great feat to attain the strength of a fly."[3] Most philosophers are found either to have purposely anticipated, or to have hastened and aided, their deaths. (*a*) How often we see common people, when led forth to death, — and not to a simple death, but to one accompanied by disgrace and sometimes by grievous suffering, — face it with such confidence, some from stubbornness and some from natural shallowness, that we can detect no change from their ordinary frame of mind: arranging their domestic affairs, commending themselves to their friends, singing, haranguing, and talking with the populace, nay, sometimes even cracking jokes, and drinking to their acquaintances, as if they were Socrates.[4] One man, who was being taken to the scaffold, told them not to go through a certain street, for there was danger that a tradesman would lay hands on him because of an old debt. Another told the hangman not to touch his throat, for fear of making him squirm with laughter, he was so ticklish. Another replied to his confessor, who promised him that he would sup that day with our Lord, "Go thither yourself; for my part, I am fasting." Another, having asked for a drink, and the hangman having drunk first, declared that he would not drink after him for fear of catching small-pox. Every one has heard the story of the

[1] Montaigne repeats the same thought in almost the same words in the Essay, "A Custom of the Isle of Cea," Book II, chap. 3: *Et ce n'est pas la recepte à une seule maladie: la mort est la recepte à tous maux.*

[2] O death, would that thou wert not willing to take life from the craven, and that valour alone could obtain thee! — Lucan, IV, 580.

[3] See Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, V, 40.

[4] This whole passage follows closely Seneca's thought in *Epistle* 70.

Picard, to whom, when he was on the very steps of the scaffold, a wench was offered, whom if he chose to marry, they would spare his life (as our laws permit on occasion). Having looked at her for a moment, and perceived that she was lame, "Tie me up! tie me up!" he cried; "she limps!" And they say, likewise, that in Denmark a man who was sentenced to have his head cut off, being actually on the scaffold, when a similar alternative was given him, declined it because the girl they offered him had hanging cheeks and too sharp a nose.[1] A man-servant who was charged with heresy at Toulouse referred, for the ground of his belief, to that of his master, a young student who was a prisoner with him; and preferred to die rather than (*c*) allow himself to be convinced that his master was in error.[2] (*a*) We read of the citizens of Arras, when King Louis XI took the city, that there were a goodly number of them who submitted to be hanged rather than say, "Vive le roi!"[3] And of such narrow-minded clowns there have been some who would not abandon their pleasantries even in death. One whom the hangman was just turning off cried: "Let go, in God's name!"[4] which was his customary refrain. And that other who, at the point of death, had been laid on a mattress by the hearth, and being asked by the doctor where he felt pain, replied: "Between the bench and the fire"; and when the priest, in order to give him extreme unction, was feeling for his feet, which were drawn up and stiffened by pain, "You'll find them," he said, "at the end of my legs." He asked the man who exhorted him to commend himself to God, "Who is going thither?" and on the other's replying, "It will be you yourself very soon, if it is his pleasure," he rejoined: "Shall I surely be there to-morrow evening?" — "Just commend yourself to him," continued the other; "you 'll be there

[1] All these instances are taken from the *Apologie d'Hérodote* of H. Estienne (XV, 20).

[2] In 1588: *que se departir de ses opinions, quelles qu'elles fussent.*

[3] See Jean Bouchet, *Annales d'Aquitaine* (1477). In the *Édition Municipale* the passage relating to the practice of suttee in the kingdom of Narsinga is inserted at this point; but in the edition of 1595 it is more appropriately placed a little further on. See page 67.

[4] *Vogue la gallée!*

very soon." — "It is better then," he retorted, "for me to carry Him my recommendations myself." [1]

(*c*) In the kingdom of Narsinga,[2] to this day, the wives of the priests are buried alive with their deceased husbands. All other wives are burned at the obsequies of their husbands, not with fortitude simply, but gaily. And when the body of their deceased king is burned, all his wives and concubines, his favourites, and every sort of official and public servant, forming a great multitude, rush so light-heartedly to the fire, to throw themselves into it with the master, that they seem to regard it as a great honour to be his companions in death.[3] (*a*) During our last wars in Milan, with so many captures and recaptures, the people, being made impatient by such perpetual alternations of fortune, so deliberately chose death, that I have heard my father say that he heard of as many as five-and-twenty heads of families who had made way with themselves in one week; an incident resembling that of the Xantians, who, besieged by Brutus, were seized pell-mell — men, women, and children — with so fierce a craving for death, that there is nothing done to escape death which they did not do to escape life; so that Brutus scarcely could save a very small number.[4]

(*c*) Every belief is strong enough to cause men to espouse it at the cost of life. The first article of that fine oath that Greece took and kept to in the Median war was that every man should exchange life for death rather than their laws for those of the Persians.[5] In the war between the Greeks and the Turks, what numbers of them are seen accepting violent death rather than renounce their faith and be baptised! A test of which no form of religion is incapable.

The kings of Castile having banished the Jews from their

[1] See Bonaventure Des Periers, *Les Nouvelles Recreations*.

[2] This name was often given by the Portuguese and others to Vijayanagar. The Hindu Empire of Vijayanagar included for 200 years, from the middle of the fourteenth to the middle of the sixteenth century, the whole of Southern India below the 15th degree of latitude.

[3] See Goulard's translation of Bishop Osorio's *Histoire du roi Emmanuel de Portugal* (1581).

[4] See Plutarch, *Life of Brutus*.

[5] See Diodorus Siculus, V, 29, and many other sources.

realm, King Jan of Portugal [1] sold them, at eight crowns a head, refuge among his people, on condition that they should depart on a certain day; and he promised to supply them with vessels to take them across to Africa. The day came, of which he had said that, when it had passed, those who had not obeyed would remain as slaves. The vessels were scantily supplied to them, and those who embarked were roughly and villainously treated by the sailors, who, in addition to many other indignities, kept them wearily sailing about, sometimes going ahead, sometimes going back, until they had consumed all their own provisions and were compelled to buy food from them at such high prices, and for so long a time, that they were not set ashore till they had nothing left. News of this inhuman treatment being carried back to those still on land, the greater number made up their minds to servitude; some pretended to change their religion. Emmanuel,[2] having come to the throne, first set them at liberty, and then, changing his mind, gave them time to leave his dominions, assigning three ports for their embarkation. He hoped, says Bishop Osorio, the best Latin historian of our time, that, the grace of freedom which he had bestowed on them having failed to convert them to Christianity, their reluctance to expose themselves, like their companions, to the thievery of the seamen, to leave a country where they had lived in great prosperity and to cast their lot in an unknown and foreign land, would bring about this result. But finding his hope disappointed, and that they were all determined to depart, he cut off two of the ports he had promised them, in order that the length and discomfort of the passage might cause some to reconsider, or in order to pile them all up together in one place for greater facility of execution of what he purposed, which was this. He ordered that all the children under fourteen should be taken from the hands of their fathers and mothers and transported out of their sight and intercourse, to a place where they would be instructed

[1] John II reigned from 1481 to 1495. This whole narrative is summarised from Osorio's *Emmanuel of Portugal*, of which Montaigne sometimes, as here, made use of the Latin text, and sometimes of Goulard's translation.

[2] Reigned from 1495 to 1521.

in our religion. It is said that this action led to a horrible spectacle — the natural affection between the parents and their children and, moreover, their zeal for their ancient beliefs, contending against this violent decree. It was a common sight to see mothers and fathers taking their own lives, and — an even stronger testimony — for very love and pity throwing their young children into wells to evade the law. Finally, the time that had been fixed having expired, they returned, for lack of means, into slavery. Some became Christians — on whose faith or that of their race, even today, a hundred years after, few Portuguese rely, although habit and lapse of time are much stronger counsellors than all other pressure.

In the city of Castelnau-Darry, fifty Albigensian heretics suffered all at one time, courageously resolute to be burned alive in one fire rather than renounce their beliefs.[1] *Quoties non modo ductores nostri*, says Cicero, *sed universi etiam exercitus, ad non dubiam mortem concurrerunt!* [2] (*b*) I have seen one of my intimate friends give hot chase to death, with a true longing rooted in his heart from various points of view,[3] which I could not diminish in him; and at the first shape of it that presented itself crowned with a halo of honour, he hastened to meet it, beyond all likelihood, with a sharp and eager hunger.

(*a*) We have many examples in our own days of persons, even children, who, from dread of some slight disaster, have killed themselves. And in this connection, an ancient writer says: "What shall we not fear, if we fear what cowardice itself has chosen as a refuge?" Were I to enter here on a long list of those of all sexes and conditions and of all sects who, in happier ages, have either awaited death with steadiness or sought it voluntarily, and sought it, not only in order to fly from the ills of this life, but in some cases simply to fly from satiety of living, and in others in the hope of a better state elsewhere — I should never have done; and the num-

[1] See Du Haillant, *Histoire de France* (1576). This sentence, which first appeared in 1595, is not found in the *Édition Municipale.*

[2] How often have not only our generals but whole armies dashed forward to meet certain death! — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, I, 37.

[3] *Enracinee en son cueur par divers visages de discours.*

ber is so infinite that, in truth, it would be a better bargain for me to count up those who have feared it. This only will I note: Pyrrho the philosopher, being one day in a tempest at sea, pointed out to those about him whom he saw to be most frightened, a pig on board in no wise disturbed by this storm, and encouraged them by this example.[1]

Shall we venture then to say that this privilege of the power of reasoning, about which we so flatter ourselves, and because of which we regard ourselves as the masters and monarchs of the rest of creation, was given us for our torment? What profits the knowledge of things,[2] if we lose the tranquillity and repose in which we should be without it, and if it puts us in worse case than Pyrrho's pig? The intelligence that has been given us for our greater welfare — shall we employ it for our destruction, combatting the purpose of Nature and the universal order of things, which ordains that every one use his tools and resources for his own pleasure?[3]

"Very good," you will answer me, "your precept is well enough for death; but what will you say of poverty which (*c*) Aristippus, Hieronymus, and (*a*) most wise men considered the worst of evils?"[4] And they who denied it in words confessed it by their acts. Posidonius being in great suffering from a sharp and painful malady, Pompey went to see him and apologised for having come at so inopportune a time to hear him discourse on philosophy. "God forbid," said Posidonius, "that pain should so prevail over me as to prevent me from discoursing and talking of that!" and he threw himself into this very subject of contempt of pain. But meanwhile pain played its part and tormented him incessantly, whereupon he exclaimed: "Do what you will, pain: I still will not say that you are an evil thing!"[5] This

[1] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Pyrrho.*

[2] *Si nous en devenons plus lasches.* This phrase, added in 1595, does not appear in the *Édition Municipale.*

[3] In 1588: *pour sa commodité et avantage?* In a letter written to M. de Mesmes (1570) Montaigne said: *Tous ce qui est sous le ciel employe les moyens et les outils que nature luy a mis en main . . . pour l'agencement et commodité de son estre.*

[4] See Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, II, 6.

[5] See *Ibid.*, 25.

tale that they make so much of — what meaning has it with respect to contempt of pain? It is only a quibble about the words; and meanwhile, if those twinges do not affect him, why does he interrupt his talk? Why does he think that he does such a great thing in not calling it an evil?

Here it is not all imagination. We argue about other matters, here it is absolute knowledge that comes into play; our very senses are judges of it;

> Qui nisi sunt veri, ratio quoque falsa sit omnis.[1]

Shall we persuade our skin that the blows of a stirrup-leather tickle it, and our palate that aloes is Bordeaux wine? Pyrrho's pig is of our company here: he is unterrified by death, but if he is beaten, he squeals and squirms. Shall we run counter to the universal law of Nature, — which is seen in every living thing under the sky, — of trembling under pain? The very trees seem to groan at the injuries we inflict on them. Death is felt only through the reason, as it is the action of an instant.

> Aut fuit, aut veniet, nihil est præsentis in illa,[2]
> Morsque minus pœnæ quam mora mortis habet.[3]

A thousand beasts, a thousand men are dead unthreatened. And, in truth, we confess that what we chiefly dread in death is pain, its customary forerunner.

(*c*) None the less, if we are to believe a holy father, *malam mortem non facit, nisi quod sequitur mortem.*[4] And I will say even more plausibly that neither what precedes nor what follows death is an appurtenance of death. We excuse ourselves falsely; and I find by experience that it is chiefly the unendurableness of the thought of death that makes pain unendurable to us, and that we feel it as doubly griev-

[1] Unless the senses be true, reason itself must be wholly deceived. — Lucretius, IV, 485.

[2] [Death] either has come or is yet to come; there is nothing in it of the present. — Étienne La Boëtie, *Satire* addressed to Montaigne.

[3] And death itself is easier to endure than the awaiting death. — Ovid, *Heroïdes*, X, 82 (Epistle of Ariadne to Theseus).

[4] Death is made an evil only by what follows death. — St. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, I, 11.

ous because it threatens us with death. But since reason accuses us of cowardice in dreading a thing so sudden, so inevitable, so imperceptible, we seize this other more defensible pretext. All those maladies which threaten no other danger than that of the malady itself we say are without danger. Toothache, or gout, however painful they may be, still, as they do not kill, who counts them as sicknesses? Now let us assume that in death we consider chiefly the pain. (*a*) In like manner, poverty has nothing to fear but this — that it will throw us into the arms of pain through the thirst, the hunger, the cold, the heat, the vigils, which it makes us suffer.

Thus we have to do with pain alone. I grant that it is the worst mischance of our being, and I grant this readily, for there is no man on earth who regards it with such disfavour or who shuns it so much as I, because hitherto, thanks to God, I have not had much familiarity with it; but it is in our power, if not to annihilate it, at least to diminish it by patience; and even when the body is perturbed by it, to maintain none the less the soul and the reason in good condition. And if it were not so, what would have brought courage and valour and strength and greatness of soul and resolution into good repute? How should they play their part if there were no pain to defy? *Avida est periculi virtus.*[1] If we have not to lie on the hard ground, to endure in complete armour the noon-day heat, to eat horse-flesh or that of an ass, to be hacked in pieces, to extract a bullet from among our bones, to be sewn up and cauterised and probed, whence shall we acquire the advantage that we desire to have over the common crowd? What the sages say, that of actions equally meritorious the one is most desirable to perform in which there is most difficulty, is a long way from avoiding evil and pain. (*c*) *Non enim hilaritate, nec lascivia, nec risu aut joco, comite levitatis, sed sæpe etiam tristes firmitate et constantia sunt beati.*[2] (*a*) And for this reason it was impossible to persuade our fathers that conquests made by the strong

[1] Courage is eager for danger. — Seneca, *De Providentia*, IV.

[2] It is not from gaiety or sportiveness or laughter or jesting, companions of frivolity, that happiness is won; even austere men often achieve it by steadfastness and fortitude. — Cicero, *De Fin.*, II, 20.

hand, at the hazard of war, were not more beneficial than those effected in all security by plots and stratagems.

Lætius est, quoties magno, sibi constat honestum.[1]

Moreover, this ought to console us, that, in the nature of things, if pain is violent, it is short; if it lasts long, it is slight; (*c*) *si gravis* [*dolor*], *brevis; si longus, levis.*[2] (*a*) You will hardly feel it long if you feel it too much; it will put an end to itself or to you; the one or the other comes to the same thing.[3] (*c*) If you do not bear it well, it will bear you off. *Memineris maximos morte finiri; parvos multa habere intervalla requietis; mediocrium nos esse dominos: ut si tolerabiles sint feramus, sin minus, e vita, quum ea non placet, tamquam e theatro exeamus.*[4]

(*a*) What makes us suffer pain so intolerantly is the not being accustomed to take our chief satisfaction in the soul,[5] (*c*) the not relying enough on her [6] who is the one sovereign mistress of our being and our behaviour. The body has for the most part but one mode of action and one kind of life; the soul changes into every variety of guise and brings into relation with herself and her condition, whatever that may be, the perceptions of the body and all other external things.[7] Therefore we must study her and question her and

[1] The nobler the virtue, the more it costs us. — Lucan, IX, 404.

[2] Cicero, *De Fin.*, II, 29. Translated by Montaigne before quoting. Cf. Seneca, *Epistles* 34 and 78.

[3] See Seneca, *Epistle* 78.

[4] Remember that the greatest sufferings are ended by death; that the little ones have many intermittences; that of those that are moderate we are the masters; that, if they are tolerable, we can bear them, but if not, when life is not agreeable to us, we can make our exit from it as from a theatre. — Cicero, *De Fin.*, I, 15.

[5] In the early editions, including 1588, there followed here the clause, *c'est d'avoir en trop de commerce avec le corps* — a thought borrowed from Seneca, *Epistle* 78: *Illud autem est quod imperitos in vexatione corporis male habet; non assueverent animo esse intensi; multum illis cum corpore fuit.* On the Bordeaux copy of 1588 (*Édition Municipale*), Montaigne first substituted for this clause: *Et de nous armer d'elle contre la mollesse du corps;* this he afterwards struck out, and added the long passage that follows in the text, in which, however, he made many changes.

[6] That is, the soul.

[7] *Tous autres accidens.*

arouse her all-powerful springs. There is no argument, no tradition, no force, which is of any avail against her inclination and her choice. Of the many thousand twists and turns she has at her command, let us make her take one conducive to our repose and preservation; then we are not only shielded from all harm, but even pleased and flattered, if it seems well to her, by hurts and ills. She turns every thing to her advantage, no matter what it is: error, dreams, are useful to her as legitimate material for making us secure and content.

It is easy to see that what gives an edge to pain and pleasure within us is our state of mind. The animals, who are unaffected by this,[1] feel in their bodies their unconstrained natural sensations, which consequently are almost invariable in each species, as we see by the conformity of their actions. If we did not disturb in our members their jurisdiction in this matter, it may be believed that we should be the better off, and nature has given them a just and moderate mingling of pleasure and of pain which cannot fail to be just, being equal and alike to all. But since we have cut loose from her rules, to abandon ourselves to the vagabond license of our imaginations, let us at least help to turn them in the most agreeable direction. Plato is displeased by our immitigable union with pain and pleasure, because it binds the soul to the body and attaches it too closely; I, on the contrary, am displeased by it, inasmuch as it detaches and separates them.[2] (*a*) Just as the enemy becomes fiercer when we fly, so pain grows proud to see us tremble before it.[3] It will surrender on much better terms to the man who shows it a bold front; we must resist it and brace ourselves against it. By being cornered and falling back, we invite and attract the destruction that threatens us. (*c*) As the body is steadier against the onset by stiffening its muscles, so is the soul.[4]

(*a*) But let us come to examples, which are proper game for the weak-loined like me: here we shall find that it is

[1] *Qui le tiennent sous boucle.*

[2] *Plato craint nostre engagement aspre a la dolur et a la volupte, d'autant qu'il oblige et atache par trop l'ame au corps. Moi plustost, au rebours, d'autant qu'il l'en desprent et descloue.* See Plato, *Phædo.*

[3] See Seneca, *Epistle* 78.

[4] See Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, II, 23.

with pain as with stones, which take on a brighter or darker hue according to the foil on which we place them, and that it fills only so much room in us as we make for it. *Tantum doluerunt*, says St. Augustine, *quantum doloribus se inseruerunt.*[1] We feel a cut from the surgeon's knife more than ten sword-cuts in the heat of battle. The pains of child-birth, which are considered severe by the doctors and by God himself,[2] and which we carry through with so many observances — there are whole nations which make nothing at all of them. I say nothing of the Lacedæmonian women; but the Swiss women with our infantry — what change do you find in them, except that, trotting after their husbands, you see them to-day carrying in their arms the child that yesterday they carried in their womb? And these make-believe Egyptian women among us go themselves to wash their newborn babes, and take their own bath, in the nearest stream. (*c*) Besides the multitude of wenches who every day conceal their children as well at their birth as at their conception, the virtuous wife of Sabinus, a Roman patrician, endured the birth of twins alone and unaided, without a word or a groan.[3] (*a*) A simple lad of Lacedæmon, having stolen a fox, and having hidden it under his cloak, (*c*) (for they dreaded the disgrace of their lack of skill in thieving even more than we dread the punishment),[4] (*a*) endured having his bowels gnawed by it rather than betray himself.[5] And another, while offering incense at a sacrifice, allowed himself to be burned to the bone by a coal that dropped into his sleeve.[6] And a great many boys have been known who, at the age of seven, merely for a test of their courage, in accordance with their education, have endured being whipped to death with-

[1] They suffered the more, the more they gave themselves up to suffering. — *De Civ. Dei*, I, 10.

[2] See *Genesis*, III, 16: In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children.

[3] See Plutarch, *Of Love*, XXXIV.

[4] In 1580–1588: (*car le larrecin y estoit action de vertu, mais par tel si qu'il estoit plus vilain qu'entre nous d'y estre surpris*).

[5] See Plutarch, *Lycurgus*. Montaigne refers again to this and the following story, and comments on them, in Book II, chap. 32.

[6] The editions of 1580–1588 add: *pour ne troubler le mystère*. See Valerius Maximus, III, 3, *ext.* 1.

out change of countenance.[1] (*c*) And Cicero saw them fight in companies, with fists and feet and teeth, till they fainted, before admitting that they were beaten.[2] *Nunquam naturam mos vinceret, est enim ea semper invicta; sed nos umbris, deliciis, otio, languore, desidia animum infecimus; opinionibus maloque more delinitum mollivimus.*[3]

(*a*) Every one knows the history of Scævola,[4] who, having slipped into the enemy's camp to kill their leader, and having failed of his purpose, in order to gain his end by a more extraordinary scheme, and to set his country free, not only confessed his design to Porsenna, who was the king he sought to kill, but added that in the king's camp there were a great number of such Romans as himself, who were accomplices in his undertaking; and, to show what manner of man he was, having caused a brazier to be brought, he saw and suffered his arm to be broiled and roasted until his very enemy, horror-struck, ordered the brazier removed. What can we say of him who did not condescend to interrupt his reading while he was under the surgeon's knife?[5] And of him who persisted in laughing at himself and gaily vying with the sufferings inflicted on him, so that the excited cruelty of the executioners who had him in their keeping, with all the contrivances of torture piled one upon another, confessed themselves to be powerless? But he was a philosopher. And what of Cæsar's gladiator, who endured having his wounds probed and cut open, laughing all the while?[6] (*c*) *Quis mediocris gladiator ingemuit? Quis vultum mutavit unquam? Quis non modo stetit, verum etiam decubuit turpiter? Quis cum decubuisset ferrum recipere jussus, collum contraxit?*[7]

[1] Montaigne repeats this statement in Book I, chap. 23, Book II, chaps. 12 and 32.

[2] See *Tusc. Disp.*, V, 27.

[3] Custom could never overcome nature, for she is invincible. But we have spoiled our minds with illusory pleasures and with the languor of idleness; we have weakened them with the charm of false belief in bad habits. — *Ibid.*

[4] See Livy, II, 12.

[5] See Seneca, *Epistle* 78, for this and the next anecdote.

[6] See Aulus Gellius, XII, 5.

[7] What ordinary gladiator ever uttered a groan? Which of them ever changed countenance? Which of them in fighting, or even in falling,

(*a*) Now let us consider the women. Who has not heard in Paris of her who caused herself to be flayed, solely to acquire the fresher colouring of a new skin? [1] There are those who have had sound, living teeth pulled out, in order to make their pronunciation more flexible or more lisping, or to arrange the teeth more regularly. How many examples we have of this sort of contempt of pain! What can they not do? What do they fear, if in the doing there is any hope of enhancement of their beauty?

(*b*) Vellere queis cura est albos a stirpe capillos,
Et faciem dempta pelle referre novam.[2]

(*a*) I have seen them swallow sand and ashes, and labour deliberately to destroy their stomachs, in order to acquire a pale complexion. To give themselves a Spanish slenderness,[3] what discomfort do they not endure, bound and girt, with great slashes on their sides, even to the quick — yes, and sometimes till these are fatal!

(*c*) It is a common custom with many nations of our day to wound themselves purposely, to give credit to their word; and our king [4] relates noteworthy instances of what he saw of this in Poland, and in relation to himself. But besides what I have heard of as having been done, of this sort, by some persons in France, I myself saw a girl,[5] to testify to the ardour of her promises and also her firmness, give herself, with the bodkin she wore in her hair, four or five sharp blows on the arm, which tore the skin and brought blood in good earnest. The Turks make for themselves great scars in honour of their mistresses; and, that the mark may remain, they instantly apply fire to the wound and hold it there an

showed cowardice? Which, when he had fallen, and was to receive his death-stroke, turned away his head? — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, II, 17.

[1] 1580: *et l'en surnommoit on Madame l'Escorchée.*

[2] They who are careful to pluck out by the roots their white hairs, and to make a new face by peeling off the skin. — Tibullus, I, 8.45. The true reading is *Tollere tunc cura*, etc.

[3] *Pour faire un corps bien espaignolé.* This word is used only by Montaigne, and by him only here. It is a French form of a Gascon word signifying *habitude, façon d'être des Espagnols.*

[4] Henri III. See de Thou (an. 1574).

[5] In 1595, this passage was so changed as to read: *Quand je viens de ces fameux Estats de Blois, j'avois veu peu auparavant une fille en Picardie.*

incredible time, to stop the bleeding and form the cicatrix.[1] Men who have seen it have written of this and have sworn to the truth of it to me. But any day there may be found those among them who, for ten *aspers*,[2] will give themselves a very deep slash on the arm or the thigh.

(*a*) I am very glad that there are witnesses nearer to us, where we are more concerned; for Christendom supplies us with them more than sufficiently. After the example of our blessed exemplar, there have been many who, from devotion, have chosen to suffer greatly.[3] We learn from a witness most worthy of belief,[4] that the King Saint Louis wore a hair-shirt until, in his old age, his confessor dispensed him from it; and that every Friday he had his priest scourge his back with five small iron chains, which, for that purpose, were always carried in a box with the other things that he used at night. Guillaume, our last Duke of Guyenne, father of that Alienor[5] who transmitted this duchy to the royal houses of France and of England, constantly wore, by way of penance, a corselet under the frock of a monk.[6] Fulke, Count of Anjou, went all the way to Jerusalem, to be scourged there by two of his servants, with a rope round his neck, in front of our Lord's sepulchre.[7] But do we not still see, on every Good Friday, in various places, a great number of men and women scourge themselves even to the tearing of their flesh and wounding to the bone?[8] This I have often seen, and without delusion; and it is said (for

[1] See Guillaume Postel, *Des Histoires Orientales* (1540).

[2] A small Turkish silver coin.

[3] *Porter la croix.*

[4] The "witness" whom Montaigne refers to, he believed to be Joinville; but unfortunately the edition of his *Chronicles* which Montaigne read was extremely inaccurate, and this statement about King Louis is not found in modern editions.

[5] Eleanor. She married, first, Louis XI; then, Henry II of England.

[6] See Jean Bouchet, *Annales d'Aquitaine.*

[7] This was Fulke III, who died in 1040. Montaigne found this account in a French translation of the *De Rebus Gestis Francorum*, of Paulus Æmilius of Verona, published in 1539.

[8] Montaigne describes in the *Journal* of his travels a similar scene that he witnessed (some time after this passage was written) in Rome, on Good Friday, 1581.

they go masked) that there are among them those who, for money, undertake thereby to warrant another's religion by a contempt of pain so much the greater as the spurs of piety are more potent than those of avarice. (*c*) Quintus Maximus buried his son, of consular rank, Marcus Cato his, prætor elect, and Lucius Paulus his two within a few days of each other, with serene countenance and giving no sign of grief.[1] I once said of some one,[2] in jest, that he had cheated divine justice; for the deaths by violence of three noble sons having been sent in one day, by way, as may be believed, of a severe chastisement, it lacked little that he received it as a blessing.[3] I have lost, but in infancy, two or three children, if not without regret, at least without distress; nevertheless there are few misfortunes which touch men so to the quick. I see a good many other common occasions for sorrow which I should scarcely feel, should they come to me; and I have scorned, when they have come, some of those to which the world ascribes so baleful an aspect that I could not dare to boast publicly of this without blushing. *Ex quo intelligitur non in natura, sed in opinione esse ægritudinem.*[4]

(*b*) Opinion is a powerful auxiliary, confident and not to be measured. Who ever sought safety and repose with such longing as Alexander and Cæsar had for disquietude and difficulties? Teres, father of Sitalces, was wont to say that, when he was not making war, it seemed to him that there was no difference between him and his groom.[5] (*c*) Cato, when consul, in order to make sure of certain cities in Spain, having merely forbidden their inhabitants to bear arms, a

[1] See Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, III, 28.

[2] This "some one" was Gaston de Foix, comte de Gurson and de Fleix, marquis de Trans. One of his sons was the husband of the Diane de Foix to whom the essay, "De l'Institution des Enfans" (Book I, chap. 26) was dedicated. Montaigne wrote in his *Ephemerides: Julius 29, 1587, le côte de Gurson, le côte de Fleix, & le chevalier, trois freres mes bôs S^rs & amis, furent tués à Môcrabeau en Agenois en un côbat fort aspre pour la service du roi de Navarre.*

[3] In 1595 this passage was made to read: *qu'il ne la prinst à faveur et gratification singuliere du Ciel. Je n'ensuis ces humeurs monstreuses.*

[4] So it is evident that the scourge of discomfort is not in nature, but in the mind. — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, III, 28.

[5] See Plutarch, *Apothegms of Kings*, etc.

great number killed themselves: *ferox gens nullam vitam rati sine armis esse.*[1] (*b*) How many men we know who have fled from the enjoyment of a quiet life in their own house, among their acquaintance, to seek the frightfulness of uninhabitable deserts, and who have cast themselves into abjection and degradation and the world's contempt, and have delighted therein, even in preference to all else. Cardinal Borromeo,[2] who died recently at Milan, maintained, in the midst of debauchery, to which his noble birth and his great wealth and the air of Italy and his youth all invited him, a mode of life so vigorous that he wore the same coat in winter as in summer, had nothing but straw for his bed, and passed what hours remained to him after discharging the duties of his office in constant study, resting on his knees, with a little bread and water beside his book, which was all that he had to eat and all the time that he gave to eating. I know some men who have derived both profit and advancement from cuckoldry, of which the mere name frightens so many persons. If sight be not the most necessary of our senses, it is certainly the most agreeable; but the most agreeable and useful of our members seem to be those which serve the purpose of generation; and yet many persons have held them in mortal hatred solely for the reason that they were too delightful, and have rejected them because of their value. So opined of his eyes the man who put them out.[3]

(*c*) The greater number and most healthy-minded among men [4] consider it great good fortune to have an abundance of children; I and some others consider the lack of them equally good fortune. And when some one asks Thales why he does not marry, he replies that he does not desire to leave any descendants of himself.[5] That our opinion gives their value to things is seen by those, many in number, which we do not regard solely by themselves in estimating them, but

[1] A fierce people who could not conceive of a life of peace. — Livy, XXXIV, 17. This sentence, beginning "Cato, when," was manifestly inserted in the wrong place.

[2] St. Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, 1538–1584.

[3] The philosopher Democritus. See Aulus Gellius, X, 17.

[4] *La plus commune et la plus saine part des hommes.*

[5] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Thales.*

with regard to ourselves. And we consider neither their qualities, nor their usefulness, but only what it costs us to obtain them, as if the cost were a part of their being; and we call value in them, not what they bring, but what we bring to them. In this respect I think we are very thrifty in our outlay; according to its weight it is of use, to the extent that it has weight. Our opinion never lets it pass with false freightage.[1] The purchase gives value to the diamond, as resistance does to virtue, grief to devotion, and bitterness to medicine.

(*b*) A certain man,[2] in order to attain poverty, threw his money into that same ocean which so many search in all parts, seeking to fish up wealth. Epicurus says that to be rich is not an alleviation, but simply a change of trouble.[3] In truth, it is not want, but rather abundance, which gives birth to avarice. I will tell my experience in regard to this matter. I have lived in three different kinds of conditions since I left childhood behind. The first period, which lasted nearly twenty years, I passed with no other than haphazard resources, depending on the arrangements and support of others, with no established profession and without regulations. I spent my money the more easily and carelessly because it all lay in the turn of fortune. I was never better off. It never happened to me to find my friends' purses closed, for I had impressed upon myself the necessity, beyond every other necessity, of never being in default at the end of the term in which I had agreed to pay my debt, which term they a thousand times prolonged, seeing the effort that I made to satisfy them; so that I gained by my thrifty and somewhat deceptive loyalty.[4] My nature is to feel some pleasure in paying, as if I relieved my shoulders of an annoying burden and of that semblance of servitude; as I feel a pleasure that

[1] *Sur quoi je m'advise que nous sommes grands mesnagiers de nostre mise. Selon qu'elle poise, elle sert de ce mesme qu'elle poise. Nostre opinion ne la laisse jamais courir a faus fret.*

[2] Aristippus. Montaigne refers to this again in Book II, chap. 11. Among other sources, this statement is found in Diogenes Laertius (*Life of Aristippus*) and in Horace, *Satires*, II, 3. 100.

[3] See Seneca, *Epistle* 17.

[4] *En maniere que j'en rendoy une loyauté mesnagere et aucunement piperesse.*

flatters me in doing a good action and pleasing another. I except those payments about which one must needs haggle and calculate; for if there is no one to whom I can give charge of them, I shamefully and unjustly postpone them as long as I can, in dread of this altercation with which both my disposition and my manner of talking are completely incompatible. There is nothing that I hate so much as haggling; it is a mere interchange of cheating and impudence. After an hour of wrangling and chaffering, one and the other side sacrifices his word and his oaths for a charge of five sous. Nevertheless I was at a disadvantage in borrowing; for, not having the courage to ask by word of mouth, I used to commit the chance to paper, which produces little effect, and which makes it very easy to refuse. I entrusted the conduct of my needs to the stars more gaily and more freely than I have since done to my own providence and my good sense. Good managers think it horrible to be in such uncertainty, and do not consider, in the first place, that most of the world lives so. How many worthy men have thrown overboard all their assured well-being, and do it every day, to seek the wind of the favour of kings and of Fortune! Cæsar, to become Cæsar, incurred debts to the amount of a million in gold, besides using all he was worth; [1] and how many merchants begin their commerce by the sale of their farms, which they send to the Indies,

Tot per impotentia freta? [2]

In so great a drying-up of piety we have thousands and thousands of colleges [3] which go on easily, awaiting every day, from the liberality of Heaven, what they must have to dine. In the second place, they do not consider that this certainty on which they rely is scarcely less uncertain and matter of chance than chance itself. I see poverty as near, outside of [4] two thousand crowns a year, as if it were close at hand. For besides the fact that fate has the power to open a hundred breaches for want to enter in through our riches,

[1] See Plutarch, *Life of Cæsar*.
[2] Across so many raging straits. — Catullus, IV, 19.
[3] That is, associations of religion or of instruction.
[4] *Au delà de*.

— (*c*) there being often no mean between the highest and the lowest fortune, —

Fortuna vitrea est; tunc, cum splendet frangitur; [1]

(*b*) and to turn topsy-turvy all our dikes and defences, I think that, from divers causes, indigence is as commonly seen to be domiciled with those who have wealth as with those who have none; and that perhaps it is somewhat less troublesome when it is alone than when it is in the company of riches, (*c*) which come rather from good management than from income: *Faber est suæ quisque fortunæ.*[2] (*b*) And an uneasy, timid rich man, full of affairs, seems to me more miserable than the man who is simply poor. (*c*) *In divitiis inopes, quod genus egestatis gravissimum est.*[3] The greatest and wealthiest princes are, by poverty and dearth, commonly driven to extreme need. For is there any more extreme than to become consequently tyrants and unjust usurpers of the property of their subjects?

(*b*) My second condition was to have money, to which I so clung that I soon laid by a notable hoard, considering my position, deeming that a man has only so much as he possesses beyond his expenses and his ordinary outgo; and that he cannot rely upon the money which he is still only in hopes of receiving, however well-founded his hopes may be. For, I said to myself, what if I should be taken unaware by such or such an accident? And as the result of these futile and fallacious imaginings, I exerted my ingenuity to provide by these superfluous savings for all emergencies; and I could still reply to him who declared that the number of emergencies was too infinite, that, if it would not suffice for all, it would for some, aye, for many. This did not go on without painful solicitude. (*c*) I kept it secret; and I, who dare to talk so much about myself, spoke of my money only with

[1] Fortune is as glass: when it is brilliant, it is fragile. — This sentence is from Publius Syrus; but Montaigne found it in the *Politiques* of Justus Lipsius, V, 18.

[2] Each man is the forger of his own fortune. — Sallust, *De Republica Ordinanda*, I, 1.

[3] Poor amid riches, which is the hardest kind of poverty. — Seneca, *Epistle* 74.

untruths, as others do who, when rich, have the air of being poor, and, when poor, of being rich, and dispense their consciences from ever testifying honestly to what they have: an absurd and shameful sort of prudence. (*b*) Was I going on a journey — it never seemed to me that I was sufficiently provided; and the more I was laden with coin, the more also was I laden with fear, sometimes as to the safety of the roads, sometimes as to the fidelity of those who carried my luggage, about which, like others I know, I was never sufficiently sure unless I had it under my eyes. Did I leave my strong-box at home — what a multitude of suspicions, and thorny thoughts, and, what is worse, incommunicable ones! My mind was always turned in that direction. (*c*) Considering every thing, it is more trouble to keep money than to get it. (*b*) If I did not conduct myself exactly as I say, at least it was difficult to prevent myself from doing so. I derived from this state little or no ease: (*c*) with more money to spend, expenditure weighed no less on me; (*b*) for, as Bion said, "A man with hair is as much displeased as a bald man, to have his hair pulled out." [1] And when you are accustomed to a certain pile [of money] and have set your mind upon it, it is no longer at your service; (*c*) you would not dare to encroach upon it. (*b*) It is a structure which, so it seems to you, will crumble if you touch it; necessity must take you by the throat for it to be broken into. And I would have first pawned my clothes, and sold a horse, with much less reluctance and less repining than I would then have made a breach in that favored purse which I kept apart. But the danger lay in this, that with difficulty can one establish definite limits to this craving (*c*) (they are hard to find in respect to things which one thinks good) (*b*) and fix the moment to stop saving. One goes on ever and ever enlarging the heap, and raising it from one figure to another, to the point of churlishly depriving oneself of the enjoyment of one's own property, and of putting it all under lock and key and making no use of it. (*c*) With this kind of use of money, the richest men in the world are those who guard the gates and walls of an important city. Every man who himself possesses money is avaricious, to my thinking. Plato

[1] Seneca, *De Tranquillitate Animi*, VIII, 3.

marshals thus the goods belonging to the body or to external conditions: health, beauty, strength, wealth; and wealth, he says, is not blind, but very clear-sighted when it is enlightened by wisdom.[1] (*b*) Dionysius the younger showed an excellent graciousness in this matter.[2] He was told that one of his Syracusan subjects had hidden a treasure in the earth; he ordered him to bring it to him, which he did, secretly keeping back a part of it with which he went to another city, where, having lost his appetite for hoarding, he began to live more liberally. Learning of this, Dionysius ordered the rest of his hoard returned to him, saying that since he had learned how to use it, he gladly gave it back.

I remained several years in this stage.[3] I know not what good spirit most beneficially drove me out of it, like the Syracusan, and sent all that habit of saving to the winds, the pleasure of a certain very expensive journey having trampled underfoot that foolish fancy. Whence I have fallen into a third sort of existence (I say what I feel about it), certainly much more agreeable and better regulated — which is, that I make my outgo run evenly with my income: sometimes one is in advance, sometimes the other, but they are never far apart. I live from day to day, and content myself with having the wherewithal to supply my present and ordinary needs; as for the extraordinary ones, all the providing in the world would not suffice for them. (*c*) And it is madness to expect that Fortune herself ever arms us sufficiently against herself. It is with our own weapons that we must fight her. Haphazard weapons will betray us at the height of need. (*b*) If I now save, it is only with the expectation of some speedy outlay; and not to buy lands, (*c*) for which I have no use, (*b*) but to buy pleasure. (*c*) *Non esse cupidum pecunia est, non esse emacem vectigal est.*[4] (*b*) I have little fear that my means will give out, nor any desire that

[1] See the *Laws*, I, not far from the beginning, where Plato says not exactly this, but something like it.

[2] Montaigne is in error here: it was Dionysius the *elder*. See Plutarch, *Apothegms of Kings*, etc.

[3] That is, in the "second condition." See page 83.

[4] Not to be covetous, is wealth; not to be spendthrift, is revenue.— Cicero, *Paradoxa Stoicorum*, VI, 3.

they shall increase. (*c*) *Divitiarum fructus est in copia, copiam declarat satietas.*[1] (*b*) And I am especially pleased that this change for the better came to me at an age that is naturally predisposed to avarice, and that I find myself quit of that malady so common to the old, and the most absurd of all human foibles.

(*c*) Feraulez, who had known both sorts of fortune, and had found that increase of possessions was not increase of appetite for drinking, eating, sleeping, and embracing his wife, and who, on the other hand, felt the urgency of household cares as a burden on his shoulders, as it is on mine, took it into his head to gratify a poor young man, his faithful friend, who was longing for wealth, and made him a present of all his riches, exceedingly great, and also of all that he was in the way of accumulating every day through the liberality of Cyrus, his kind master, and through war: on condition that this young man should undertake to maintain and support him honourably, as his guest and his friend. They thus lived from that time very happily, and both equally glad of the change in their condition.[2] That is a course which I should very heartily imitate. And I praise highly the fortune of an elderly prelate whom I know to have resigned his purse so completely, as to both receipts and expenditures, sometimes to one chosen servant, sometimes to another, that he has glided through many years in as great ignorance of his household affairs of that nature as any stranger. Confidence in another's goodness is no slight testimony of one's own goodness, therefore God freely favours it. And respecting him,[3] I know of no household more worthily or more consistently managed than his. Happy is he who has regulated his needs so accurately that his means can supply them without his being anxious or kept busied about them, whilst the spending or collecting of them does not interrupt other occupations that he follows, more suitable, more tranquil, and more after his own heart.

(*b*) Affluence, then, and indigence, depend on each man's

[1] The fruit of riches is abundance; contentment indicates abundance. — Cicero, *Paradoxa*, VI, 2.

[2] See Xenophon, *Cyropædeia*, VIII, 3.35–50.

[3] That is, the "elderly prelate."

opinion; and renown and health, no less than wealth, have just so much charm and pleasure-giving as he who possesses them attributes to them. (*c*) Every one is in good or bad case according as he thinks himself to be so. Not he whom others believe to be well off, but he who believes it himself, is happy, and in that matter the belief alone creates essential truth. Fortune does us neither good nor harm; she simply offers us their material and seed, which our soul, more powerful than she,[1] turns and applies as it pleases, being the sole cause and controller of her own happy or unhappy state.[2] (*b*) External circumstances [3] take savour and colour from the internal constitution, just as our garments warm us, not with their warmth, but with our own, which they are adapted to keep in and nourish;[4] who should cover with them a cold body would obtain from them the same service for its coldness: thus snow and ice are preserved.

[5](*a*) Certainly just as study is torment to an indolent man and abstinence from wine to a drunkard, as frugality is abhorrent to the luxurious and exercise is distressful to an effeminate and slothful man, so it is with the rest. Things are neither so grievous nor so difficult in themselves, but our weakness and cowardice make them so. To judge of great and high things, one must have a mind of the same quality; otherwise we attribute to them the defect which is ours. A straight oar always looks crooked in the water. It does not matter that the thing simply is seen, but how it is seen.[6]

Now, amongst so many arguments which in divers ways urge men to despise death and to bear pain, do we not find one to serve us? And amongst all these varieties of ideas which have persuaded others, may not each man apply to himself the one most in accord with his nature? If he can not digest the cleansing purgative powerful to eradicate the evil, let him at least take a sedative to relieve it. (*c*) *Opinio est*

[1] Fortune.

[2] See Seneca, *Epistle* 98.

[3] *Accessions:* probably a misprint for *accessoires.*

[4] See Plutarch, *Of Vice and Virtue.*

[5] At this point we return to the text of the first edition (1580); beginning with the story of Quintus Maximus on page 79, all the intervening matter was added in 1588 or later.

[6] This whole passage is taken from Seneca, *Epistle* 71.

quædam effeminata ac levis, nec in dolore magis quam eadem in voluptate: qua quum liquescimus fluimusque mollitia, apis aculeum sine clamore ferre non possumus. Totum in eo est ut tibi imperes.[1] (*a*) Moreover, we do not elude philosophy by exaggerating beyond measure the sharpness of sufferings and human weakness. For we coerce it to fall back upon these unanswerable retorts: if it be unfortunate to live in need, at least there is no need to live in need.[2] (*c*) No man is long in evil case save by his own fault.[3] He who has not the courage to support either death or life, who will neither resist nor fly — what shall be done with him?

CHAPTER XV

UNREASONABLE PERSISTENCE IN THE DEFENCE OF A STRONGHOLD IS PUNISHED[4]

The subject of this Essay has so little to do with our own day that the first sentence is the only one of general interest. This sentence is an admirable expression of Montaigne's esteem for *moderation*, his constant desire to maintain the *mean*. He recognises, as Shakespeare does, that

> Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied.
> (*Romeo and Juliet.*)

Elsewhere, in the "Apology" (Book II, chapter 12), he says, speaking of the limits and boundary lines of all knowledge, "An extreme degree has a wrong quality as with virtue."

And again, in the Essay "Of Moderation" (Book I, chapter 30), "We can so hold virtue as to render it sinful."

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[1] There is a certain effeminate and frivolous humour, common both to pleasure and to pain, which so softens and melts us that we can not bear the sting of a bee without crying out. . . . The whole matter turns on command of one's self. — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, II, 22.

[2] See Seneca, *Epistle* 12: *Malum est in necessitate vivere; sed in necessitate vivere necessitatis nulla est.*

[3] On the Bordeaux copy of 1588, Montaigne first wrote the source of this sentence: *Nemo nisi sua culpa diu dolet;* then erased it, and substituted this translation.

[4] *On est puny pour s'opiniastrer à une place sans raison.* — [*Place* = *place forte.*]

VALOUR, like the other virtues, has its limits, which being overstepped, we find ourselves followers of vice; in such wise that, in its own region, a man may give way to rashness, obstinacy, and foolishness, if he does not well know their boundaries, the lines of which are, in truth, not easy to discover. From this consideration arises the custom we have in time of war, of punishing with death those who persist in defending a stronghold which, according to military rules, can not be held. Otherwise, with the hope of impunity, there would be no hovel that might not delay an army. The Constable de Montmorency, at the siege of Pavia,[1] having been appointed to cross the Ticino and establish himself in the Faubourg St. Antoine, being hindered by a tower at the end of a bridge which persisted in contesting the way, had every one in it hanged. And afterward, accompanying my lord the dauphin in his expedition beyond the Alps, having taken by force the castle of Villano, and all those in it having been torn to pieces by the fury of the soldiers, save only the captain [2] and the ensign, he caused them also to be hanged and strangled for the same reason. As Captain Martin du Bellay, when Governor of Turin in that same region, likewise did to Captain de St. Bony, all his soldiers having been massacred on the taking of that place.[3] But inasmuch as the judgement of the strength or weakness of the place is based on the estimate and counterpoise of the besieging forces (for a man might justifiably hold out against two culverins who would be mad to await the assault of thirty cannon), and even takes into the account the greatness of the victorious prince, his reputation, the respect due to him, there is danger that the scales may be weighted overmuch on this side. And it happens in these same conditions that some men have so high an opinion of themselves and their powers that,

[1] See du Bellay, II. Montmorency was not made constable till fifteen years later, but had been made a marshal three years before.

[2] The word "capitaine," as used by Montaigne, denotes simply a commander of troops. The brothers du Bellay (both of whom wrote memoirs) were at one time or another at the head of troops. See du Bellay, VIII.

[3] *Ibid.*, IX.

as it does not seem comprehensible to them that any thing is worthy to make head against them, they put every one to the sword wherever they meet with resistance, so long as their good fortune lasts; as we see by the forms of summons and defiance which the Eastern princes, and their successors who still remain, are accustomed to use — proud and haughty and full of an unmannerly tone of command. (*c*) And in the region where the Portuguese cut into the Indies, they found nations with this universal and inviolable law, that every enemy vanquished by the king in person, or by his lieutenant, is outside all terms of ransom or pardon.[1] (*b*) Thus every one who can, must especially beware of falling into the hands of a hostile, victorious, well-armed judge.

CHAPTER XVI

OF THE PUNISHMENT OF COWARDICE

ANOTHER exhibition of Montaigne's familiarity in thought with military matters. And it was not in thought merely that he was familiar with them. How much of a soldier he himself had been is a matter of discussion, but it is quite certain that he had lived in camps and borne the fatigue of marches.

The first sentence gives the text of the Essay. But the most important passage is that where Montaigne refers to the "view of those who condemn capital punishment for heretics and unbelievers." It was hardly safe to do more than to hint at such an opinion — to drop it as Montaigne does here into the middle of a page; but we shall see later how earnestly he himself held it.

I ONCE heard it maintained by a prince and very great captain that a soldier could not be condemned to death for faint-heartedness; and at table he told the story of the Seigneur de Vervins, who was sentenced to death for surrendering Boulogne.[2] In truth, it is reasonable to make a great distinction between the faults which come from our weakness and those which come from our evil intent; for in the one case we have knowingly set ourselves

[1] See Goulard, *Histoire du Portugal*, XIV, 15.

[2] See du Bellay, X. He surrendered Boulogne to Henry VIII in 1545.

against the laws of reason which nature has imprinted in us; and in the other case it seems that we could call upon that same nature to answer for having left us in such imperfection and feebleness. So that many people have thought that we could not be blamed except for what we do against our consciences; and on this rule is based in part the view of those who condemn capital punishment for heretics and unbelievers, and that which maintains that an advocate and a judge can not be held to account for having fallen short in the discharge of their duties through ignorance. But as for cowardice, it is certain that the most usual way is to chastise it by shame and ignominy. And it is said that this rule was first employed by the legislator Charondas,[1] and that before his time the laws of Greece punished with death those who had run away from a battle, whereas he decreed only that they should be for three days seated in the public square, dressed in women's clothes, in the hope that they might still be made use of, their courage being restored by this disgrace. (*c*) *Suffundere malis hominis sanguinem quam effundere.*[2] (*a*) It seems, too, that the Roman laws in old times condemned to death those who had run away; for Ammianus Marcellinus relates [3] that the Emperor Julian condemned ten of his soldiers, who had turned their backs during a charge against the Parthians, to be degraded and afterward to suffer death, according, as he says, to the ancient laws. But at another time, for a similar offence, he condemned others only to remain among the prisoners under the standard of the baggage.[4] (*c*) The severe condemnation by the Roman people of the troops who escaped from Cannæ, and, in that same war, of those who were the companions of Cneius Fulvius in his defeat,

[1] See Diodorus Siculus, XII, 4.

[2] Seek rather to bring a man's blood to his cheek than to shed it. — Tertullian, *Apologeticum*. The original has *maluit*; Montaigne took the quotation from the *Adversus Dialogistam* of Justus Lipsius, where *malis* is substituted for *maluit*.

[3] See Ammianus Marcellinus, XXIV, 4. This fact concerns the Emperor Julian the Apostate, when fighting with the *Persians* in A.D. 363, just before his death.

[4] *Ibid.*, XXV, 1. This took place at nearly the same time as the preceding. A body of cavalry had failed to make a proper charge.

did not go so far as death.[1] Yet it is to be feared that disgrace drives them to despair, and makes them not lukewarm simply, but foes.

(*a*) In the time of our fathers, the Seigneur de Franget, formerly lieutenant of the maréchal de Chastillon's company, having been made governor of Fontarabia by the maréchal de Chabannes, in place of Monsieur de Lude, and having surrendered it to the Spaniards, was condemned to be deprived of his titles, and to be declared — and his posterity as well as himself — base-born, taxable, and incapable of bearing arms; and this harsh sentence was carried into effect at Lyons.[2] Later, a similar punishment was inflicted on all the gentlemen who were in Guise when the Comte de Nansau entered there,[3] and others still later.

However, if there should be either ignorance or cowardice so gross and so manifest that it surpassed all ordinary examples, there would be good ground for taking it as sufficient proof of knavery and evil intent, and for chastising it as such.

CHAPTER XVII

A PROCEEDING OF SOME AMBASSADORS

I SOMETIMES wonder whether Montaigne wrote his title at the head of his sheet of paper, and then, pausing a moment and thinking of first one and then another thing in connection with it, caught suddenly a thought that he wished to put in words and began the Essay. Or did he sit with pen near at hand and jot down from time to time an interesting passage in the book he was reading, or the memory or fancy or reflection that came to his mind; and when a few pages were thus brokenly written, did he then choose his title from some one of the many last subjects touched upon?

At all events we hear nothing of *ambassadors* till half-way through the Essay, and then to very little purpose; but the first sentence of the first paragraph, and the second paragraph are of much interest, — much importance, one may say, — as furnishing some of those details

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[1] See Livy, XXV, 7, 22; XXVI, 1.

[2] See du Bellay, II.

[3] *Ibid.*, VII. The Comte de Nansau led an army into Picardy in 1537, and the citizens of Guise showed both cowardice and pusillanimity.

with regard to Montaigne's own mind and manners, which aid us to form our conception of him. The Essay is truly of the proceedings of Montaigne, rather than of ambassadors.

The special ambassadorial proceeding that it treats of is the dissimulation and even concealment of the truth which ambassadors sometimes practise toward their masters.

I OBSERVE in my travels this practice — in order always to learn something from intercourse with others, which is one of the best schools possible [1] — of always leading those with whom I am conversing to talk of the things they know best:

> Basti al nocchiero ragionar de' venti,
> Al bifolco dei tori, et le sue piaghe
> Conti'l guerrier, conti'l pastor gli armenti.[2]

For it most frequently happens, on the contrary, that every one prefers to discourse of the occupations of another rather than his own, deeming that it is so much fresh reputation gained; witness Archidamus's rebuke to Periander, that he abandoned the fame of a good doctor to acquire that of a wretched poet.[3] (*c*) See how diffusely Cæsar holds forth to make us understand his inventions for building bridges and engines of war,[4] and how concise he is, in comparison, when he is speaking of his professional functions, of his valour, and regarding the management of his troops. His exploits sufficiently prove him to be an excellent captain; he desires to make himself known as an excellent engineer, a somewhat alien matter. A man of the legal profession, being taken not long since to see a study supplied with all sorts of books of his own calling and of every other kind, found there nothing to talk about. But he paused to comment severely and magisterially upon a barricade placed on the winding staircase of the study, which a hundred officers and common soldiers

[1] Cf. the old proverb: *Table vaut escole notable* — Table-talk is an excellent schoolmaster.

[2] Let the pilot be content to speak of the winds, the labourer of his bulls; and let the warrior tell of his wounds, the shepherd of his flocks. — An Italian translation of Propertius, II, 1.43, which Montaigne found in Stefano Guazzo's *Civil Conversation*.

[3] See Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians*.

[4] See *De Bello Gallico*, IV, 17.

see every day without note and without displeasure. The elder Dionysius was a very great commander in war, as befitted his position;[1] but he laboured to obtain commendation chiefly for his poetry, which indeed he knew little about.

(*a*) Optat ephippia bos piger optat arare caballus.[2]

(*c*) By such procedure you never attain any thing worth while. (*a*) Thus the architect, the painter, the shoemaker should always be thrown back, each on his own interests. And in this connection, when reading history, which is everybody's subject, I am wont to consider who the writers of it are: if they are persons who practise no other profession than letters, I attend mainly to their style and language; if they are physicians, I believe them more readily in what they tell us of the temperature, of the health and constitution of princes, of wounds and diseases; and, if jurists, there must be studied in them the controversies about rights, the laws, the foundations of governments, and such matters; if theologians, affairs of the church, ecclesiastical censures, dispensations, and marriages; if courtiers, manners and ceremonial; if military men, such things as pertain to their profession, and, chiefly, accounts of the exploits in which they have personally taken part; if ambassadors, diplomatic practices, private information, usages,[3] and the ways to carry them on. For this reason, that which I should have passed over in another without pausing, I have noted and weighed in the history of the Seigneur de Langey,[4] who was very well informed in such matters. It is what follows his report of those fine reasonings of the Emperor Charles the Fifth before the consistory at Rome,[5] in the presence of the Bishop of Maçon and the Seigneur de Velly, our ambassadors, wherein he had introduced many insulting remarks about us, and among other things had said that, if his

[1] See Diodorus Siculus, XV, 6. Montaigne speaks of this more at length in the essay "Of Presumption," Book II, chap. 17.

[2] The slow ox desires saddle and bridle; the horse desires to plough. — Horace, *Epistles*, I, 14.43.

[3] *Les menees, intelligences, et pratiques.*

[4] Guillaume du Bellay.

[5] See du Bellay, V.

officers and soldiers had no more loyalty and no more knowledge of military art than those of the king[1] had, he would at once, with a rope about his neck, go to him to ask mercy (and it seems that he believed something of this: for two or three times later in his life it chanced that he repeated these same words); and he challenged the king to fight with him in their shirts, with sword and dagger, on board a boat.) The said Seigneur de Langey, continuing his story, adds that the said ambassadors, in preparing a despatch to the king concerning these matters, concealed the greater part of them from him, and even said nothing of the two foregoing passages. Now, I find it very strange that it should be in the power of an ambassador to decide concerning the warnings he should give to his master, even when they were of such consequence, coming from such a personage, and uttered in so large an assembly. And it would have seemed to me the duty of the servant to represent things faithfully, in their entirety, just as they happened, so that the master should be free to command, to judge, and to choose; for to twist or conceal the truth, for fear lest he take it otherwise than he ought and lest it drive him to some ill-advised course of action, and meanwhile to leave him in ignorance of his affairs — that would have seemed to me to belong to him who makes the law, not to him who receives it; to the administrator and master of discipline, not to him who ought to deem himself inferior, not in authority only, but in wisdom and good counsel. However this may be, I should not desire to be served in that fashion in my small concerns. (*c*) We are so ready to withdraw ourselves from another's command on any pretext, and to encroach upon mastership; every one aspires so naturally to liberty and authority, that no benefit ought to be so dear to the superior, coming from those who serve him, as should be their simple and sincere obedience.

The function of command is perverted when one obeys from choice, not from subordination.[2] And P. Crassus, whom the Romans deemed five times happy,[3] when he was

[1] Of France.

[2] See Aulus Gellius, I, 13.24.

[3] See *Ibid.*: *Quod esset ditissimus, quod nobilissimus, quod eloquentissimus, quod jurisconsultissimus, quod pontifex maximus.*

consul in Asia, having ordered a Greek engineer to bring him the larger of two beams [1] he had seen at Athens, for use in some battering ram which he proposed to make, the engineer, being entitled, he thought, by his own knowledge, took the liberty of choosing otherwise, and brought the smaller, which, by the judgement of his art, was the most suitable. Crassus, having listened patiently to his reasons, had him soundly whipped, considering the importance of discipline greater than the importance of the work.

But, on the other hand, it is to be considered that such hard-and-fast obedience is due only to precise and predetermined commands. Ambassadors have a freer office which, in several respects, is entirely at their disposal. They do not simply execute the will of their master, but they likewise, by their advice, shape and direct it. I have seen in my time men in high command rebuked for having rather obeyed the words of the king's letters than the exigencies of the business they had in hand. Those who understand such matters still blame the custom of the kings of Persia in giving so short a span to the powers of their agents and lieutenants that for the merest trifles they had to recur to their instructions — the consequent delay, in so vast an extent of dominion, having often caused serious injury to affairs. And when Crassus wrote to a professional man, and informed him of the use he proposed to make of the beam, did he not seem to consult with him, and to invite him to give his own opinion?

CHAPTER XVIII

OF FEAR

MONTAIGNE may say, if he pleases, that he is not *un bon naturaliste* (natural philosopher), but every page of his writing shows how intimately he knew human nature; and this little disquisition on Fear is full of truths derived, as usual, from his observation of others and of himself. If he did not know (as he says) what were the springs of fear, he well knew what were the effects of the currents of both private fear and public fear. He had "seen" (probably when with the army) many people beside themselves with fear, and he had read of delirious flights into the

[1] *Deus mas de navire.*

very mouth of danger, and of trance-like stupidities of inaction, and also of seeming courage, all caused by this strange passion.

And his conclusion from all this is, — and herein he truly shows himself *bon naturaliste*, — "The thing I am most afraid of is fear."

A somewhat irrelevant sentence: "Those who are in extreme dread . . . of being exiled . . ." brings vividly before us the *fortunes* of those days, the causes for fear, for "constant anguish," of which *we* know nothing.

Obstupui, steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit.[1]

I AM not a good natural philosopher,[2] as the term is, and I do not well know by what authority fear acts in us; but I know this, that it is a strange passion, and physicians say that there is none which more quickly sweeps our judgement from its due place. In truth, I have seen many persons beside themselves with fear; and in the calmest minds it is beyond question that, while the attack lasts, it causes terrible bewilderments. I leave aside the common people, to whom it sometimes presents its grandsires come from their graves wrapped in their winding-sheets, sometimes hobgoblins or imps or chimæras. But even among soldiers, where it should least of all find a place, how many times has it transformed a flock of sheep into a squadron of pikemen; reeds and rushes into men-at-arms and lancers; friends into foes, and the white cross into the red![3]

When Monsieur de Bourbon took Rome,[4] a standard-bearer, who was on guard at the gate of the quarter of St. Peter, was so terrified at the first alarum, that he rushed through a breach in a ruined wall, standard in hand, out of the city and straight to the enemy, thinking that he was going into the city; and at last, seeing the troop of Monsieur de Bourbon preparing to meet him, still thinking that it was a sortie on the part of those within the city, he came to himself, and, turning about, reëntered by the same breach through which he had gone forth more than three hundred

[1] I was stunned, my hair stood on end, and my voice stuck in my throat. — Virgil, *Æneid*, II, 774.

[2] *Bon naturaliste.*

[3] The "croix blanche" of France, and the "croix rouge" of Spain.

[4] In 1527. See du Bellay, III.

paces into the open fields. By no means so fortunate was the ensign of Captain Juille, when St. Pol was taken from us by the Comte de Bures and Monsieur du Reu; for being so beside himself with fright as to throw himself with his standard out of the city through a loop-hole, he was cut to pieces by the besiegers.[1] And in the same siege, that was a memorable fear which so seized and contracted and froze the heart of a gentleman, that he fell stark dead in the breach, without a wound.

(*b*) Similar fear sometimes impels a whole multitude. In one of the encounters of Germanicus with the Germans, two large bodies took, from fright, opposite roads: one fled in the direction from which the other came.[2] (*a*) Sometimes it gives wings to our heels, as in the first two cases; sometimes it stays our feet and hobbles them, as we read of the Emperor Theophilus, who, in a battle he lost against the Agarenes, was so astounded and stupefied that he could not decide to fly (*b*) (*adeo pavor etiam auxilia formidat*)[3] (*a*) till Manuel, one of the principal officers of his army, having pulled and shaken him as if to wake him from a deep sleep, said to him: "If you don't come with me, I shall kill you; for it is better that you should lose your life than that, being a prisoner, you should destroy the Empire."[4]

(*c*) Fear shows its supreme force when, in its own service, it gives to us the courage which it has stolen from our duty and our honour. In the first regular[5] battle that the Romans lost against Hannibal, under the Consul Sempronius, a body of fully ten thousand foot, seized with panic, and seeing nowhere else to force a passage for their cowardice, rushed at the main body of the enemy, which they cut

[1] See du Bellay, VIII, for this and the following episode.

[2] See Tacitus, *Annals*, I, 63.

[3] So greatly does fear dread even assistance. — Quintus Curtius, III, 2.

[4] See the *Annals* of Zonaras. This chronicler died in 1130. His work was published at Basle in 1557, but Montaigne used a French translation published in 1560. The essay ended here in 1580 to 1588.

[5] *Juste*. Montaigne uses the word several times, as here, in the Latin sense. It was the battle of Trebia, in 218 B.C., which Livy describes in Book XXI, 56. Montaigne refers to it again in the Essay, "Of the Custom of wearing Clothes," Book I, chap. 36.

through by a superhuman effort, with great slaughter of the Carthaginians, purchasing a shameful flight at the same price at which they might have had a glorious victory.

The thing I am most afraid of is fear. And, indeed, it surpasses in sharpness all other calamities. Could there be a keener and more justified emotion than that of Pompey's friends, who were on his ship and were spectators of that horrible massacre?[1] And yet, fear of the Egyptian vessels which were beginning to draw near so stifled this emotion, that it was noticed that they were occupied only in urging the sailors to hasten, and in saving themselves by rowing, until, when they arrived at Tyre and were free from fear, they were at leisure to turn their thoughts to the loss they had met with, and to give free rein to the lamentations and tears which that other stronger passion had held in check.

Tum pavor sapientiam omnem mihi ex animo expectorat.[2]

Those who have been well thrashed in some encounter, and are still wounded and bleeding, can be led back to the charge the next day; but those who have conceived a sound fear of the foe, those you cannot make even look him in the face. Those who are in extreme dread of losing their property, of being exiled, of being enslaved, live in constant anguish, unable to eat or drink or sleep; while the poor, the exiled, the slaves, often live as happily as any others. And the many people who, finding unendurable the stings of fear, hang or drown themselves, or throw themselves from heights, teach us clearly that fear is more importunate and unbearable than is death. The Greeks recognise another variety of it, which is not due to the wandering of our reason, coming, they say, without apparent cause and by an impulse from above. Whole nations are often seen to be seized by it, and whole armies. Such was that which brought

[1] See Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, III, 27.

[2] Then fear expelled all feeling from my breast. — Ennius, *apud* Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, IV, 8. This passage, beginning with "Could there be a keener" (11 lines above), and ending with this line of Ennius, does not appear on the Bordeaux copy of 1588, but there is a mark indicating an interlineation, and a piece of wafer used to affix an additional sheet. The passage as it stands first appeared in 1595.

marvellous desolation upon Carthage.[1] Only shrieks and terrified voices were heard; the inhabitants were seen rushing from their houses as at an alarm, and attacking, wounding, and killing one another, as if they were enemies who had come to take possession of their city. Every thing was in confusion and tumult until they had appeased the anger of the gods by prayers and sacrifices. Such conditions were called "panic terrors." [2]

CHAPTER XIX

THAT OUR FORTUNE MUST NOT BE JUDGED OF UNTIL AFTER DEATH

This Essay is entirely described by its title. Its interest is at once increased and diminished by the fact that many of the opinions Montaigne here sets forth he disavowed in later years.

It was written (except the last two paragraphs) in 1572, when he was not quite forty years old, and when he had not passed beyond the ideas about death that were familiar to his generation. In after years he was far from considering the day of death as "the master day"; and the wish expressed in the last sentence, it is matter for rejoicing that he was able to accomplish — "one of my chief endeavours regarding my own end is that it may carry itself well, that is to say, quietly and insensibly." The last words in the original are *quietement et sourdement*, and the passage is undoubtedly one that Pascal stigmatizes when he says: "Il ne pense qu'à mourir lâchement et mollement par tout son livre." The word *sourdement* is to be noted. Montaigne substituted it (in the posthumous edition) for *seurement*, and it is open to question whether he did not thereby modify the conception. Cotgrave defines *sourdement* as "privately . . . in huggermugger, without any din or noise."

From what Montaigne says elsewhere of his preference for dying away from home, and of the common confusion and distresses of a death-bed (see Book III, chapter 12, a few pages from the beginning, and Book I, chapter 20, last sentence), it is possible to believe that he was thinking of external quietness as well as of that of the soul.

It may be that in the last paragraph, he refers to La Boëtie's death; but the phrase "a glorious end," — *une fin pompeuse*, — unless the word may be understood as descriptive simply of moral *stateliness*, sounds oddly in regard to his friend's peaceful and domestic passing from life; as also does the statement about this death leading to "the power and

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[1] See Diodorus Siculus, XV, 7.15–17.

[2] See Plutarch, *Of Isis and Osiris*.

the fame" to which the personage had aspired. La Boëtie's fame was in some part of Montaigne's creating. It would seem as if Montaigne were speaking of some great public character. But of whom? Henri, duc de Guise, has been suggested; but that is absurd. A brutal assassination is not *une fin pompeuse;* and neither honour nor honours followed the duke after death.

The allusion to the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots (1587), was added in 1595. Montaigne may have seen her at the French Court, and been all the more touched by her tragedy.

Scilicet ultima semper
Expectanda dies homini est, dicique beatus
Ante obitum nemo supremaque funera debet.[1]

CHILDREN know the story of King Crœsus which regards this point: that, having been made prisoner by Cyrus and condemned to death, he exclaimed at the moment of his execution, "O Solon! Solon!" This being reported to Cyrus, and he having asked what it meant, Crœsus informed him that he was then, at his cost, verifying the warning which Solon had given him in other days, that men, however much Fortune may seem to smile on them [whatever riches and kingdoms and empires they may have on their hands],[2] cannot be called fortunate until we have seen how the last day of their lives went by, because of the uncertainty and variableness of mortal things, which, at a very slight stirring, change from one condition to another wholly different.[3] And therefore Agesilaus, to some one who called the King of Persia fortunate because he had come so young to such a powerful estate, replied: "Yes, forsooth, but Priam at the same age was not unfortunate."[4] Sometimes, of kings of Macedonia, successors of the great Alexander, Fortune makes joiners and clerks at Rome;[5] of tyrants of Sicily, schoolmasters at

[1] For always the last day of a man must be awaited; and no man should be called blessed before his death and the last rites of his funeral. — Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, III, 135.

[2] Passage in square brackets omitted in 1595.

[3] See Herodotus, I, 86. Montaigne had already referred to this saying of Solon in chapter 3 of this Book.

[4] See Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians.*

[5] An allusion to Philip, son of Perseus. See Plutarch, *Life of Paulus Æmilius.*

Corinth;[1] and a conqueror of half the world and the ruler of countless armies, she renders a wretched suppliant of the base-born officials of the king of Egypt, so high a price did the great Pompey pay for the lengthening of his life by five or six months.[2] And in the time of our fathers that Ludovic Sforza, tenth duke of Milan, who had so long kept all Italy in a turmoil, was seen to die at Loches, but not till he had lived there ten years, which was the worst part of his catastrophe.[3] (*c*) The loveliest of queens,[4] widow of the greatest king in all Christendom, has she not just died by the hand of an executioner? Shameful and barbarous cruelty![5] (*a*) And a thousand like examples; for it would seem that, as storms and tempests rage against the pride and loftiness of our buildings, so there are, on high, spirits envious of earthly grandeurs.

> Usque adeo res humanas vis abdita quædam
> Obterit, et pulchros fasces sævasque secures
> Proculcare, ac ludibrio sibi habere videtur.[6]

And it would seem that Fortune precisely watches for the last day of our life, in order to show her power to overturn in an instant what she has built up in long years,[7] and makes us cry, like Laberius: *Nimirum hac die una plus vixi mihi quam vivendum fuit.*[8]

So that good judgement of Solon may wisely be accepted. But because by him, as a philosopher, the favours of Fortune are ranked neither as good luck nor as ill luck, and

[1] An allusion to the familiar story of Dionysius the tyrant, driven from his realm by Timoleon.

[2] See Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, I, 35.

[3] See Guicciardini, IV.

[4] Mary, Queen of Scots, widow of François II. She was executed in 1587, but this passage did not appear in the Essays until after Montaigne's death.

[5] This last sentence is not in the *Édition Municipale*, but was added in 1595.

[6] So true it is that a hidden power tramples on human affairs, and seems as in sport to tread underfoot the fair rods and the cruel axes. — Lucretius, V, 1233.

[7] See Seneca, *Epistle* 98: *Incrementa lente exeunt, festinatur in damnum.*

[8] Surely I have lived to-day one day longer than I should have lived. — Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, II, 7.

grandeur, wealth, and power are almost indifferent chances of condition, I think it very possible that he looked deeper, and meant to say that this same good luck of our lives, which depends on the tranquillity of a lofty spirit,[1] and on the resolution and confidence of a well-ordered mind, should never be accredited to a man until we have seen him play the last and, doubtless, the most difficult act of his drama. In all the rest there may be disguise, whether it be that those fine reasonings of philosophy are in us only conventionally, or that the things that happen, not proving us to the quick, permit us to keep always a serene demeanour. But in this last scene between Death and ourselves, there is no more feigning, we must talk plainly,[2] we must show what there is good and unspotted in the bottom of the pot;

> Nam veræ voces tum demum pectore ab imo
> Ejiciuntur, et eripitur persona, manet res.[3]

It is thus that all the other acts of our lives must be put to the touch and tested by this last stroke. It is the master-day, it is the day that is the judge of all other days. It is the day, says one of the ancients, which is to pass judgement on all my past years.[4] I postpone until death the trial of the fruit of my studies. We shall see then whether my words come from the lips or the heart.[5] (*b*) I have known many men by the manner of their deaths to give to their whole life a good or evil esteem. Scipio, Pompey's father-in-law, amended, by dying nobly, the evil opinion that men had held of him up to that time.[6] Epaminondas, being asked which of the three he most valued, Chabrias, Iphicrates, or himself, replied: "It must first be seen how we die, before the question can be solved." [7] Verily, he [8] would be robbed

[1] *D'un esprit bien nê.*

[2] *Parler françois.*

[3] For then at last words of truth come from the depths of the breast; the mask is torn off; reality remains. — Lucretius, III, 57. The original has *eliciuntur* in the second line.

[4] See Seneca, *Epistle* 26, 4: *Ille laturus sententiam de omnibus annis meis dies veneret.*

[5] The Essay ended here in the editions preceding 1588.

[6] See Seneca, *Epistle* 24.

[7] See Plutarch, *Apothegms of Kings*, etc. [8] Epaminondas.

of much were he weighed without the glory and grandeur of the end of his life. God hath willed it as it pleased him; but in my own days, three of the most execrable persons I have known, living in every sort of abomination, and the most infamous, have had well-ordered deaths and perfectly disposed in every detail.

(*c*) There are noble and fortunate deaths. I have seen death cut short a wonderful upward progress in the spring-time of its development,[1] by an end so glorious that, in my opinion, there was nothing in the man's ambitious and daring plans so exalted as was their interruption. He arrived without going thither at the place where he would be, more grandly and gloriously than had been his desire and hopes, and attained by his fall the power and the fame to which he aspired by his course in the race.

In judging another's life I observe always how its close has borne itself, and my chief endeavour regarding my own end is that it may carry itself well, that is to say, quietly and insensibly.[2]

CHAPTER XX

THAT TO THINK AS A PHILOSOPHER IS TO LEARN TO DIE

This Essay opens with a consideration of the meaning of the sentence of Cicero which forms its title; and continues with the assertion that to lose the fear of death is part of that pleasure, or *volupté* (as Montaigne chooses to call it from a wilful desire to shock those to whom this word "is so abhorrent"), which is "the final object of our aim"; and from this he passes into a noble passage regarding the *pleasure of virtue*, condemning those "who instruct us that her quest is hard and laborious." The last sentence could hardly be finer. (The whole paragraph belongs to 1595.)

Continuing, he says: "The end of our career is death; it is the unavoidable thing in full sight." The original text has a deeper significance than can easily be conveyed in English; the phrase is: Death "est le but de nostre carriere . . . c'est l'object de nostre visee"; this can be paraphrased: "the winning post of our race . . . the object of our aim."

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[1] *Dans la fleur de son croist.*

[2] *Sourdement:* substituted in 1595 for *seurement.*

In one of the latest and noblest of the Essays ("Of Physiognomy," Book III, Chapter 12) he precisely contradicts this remark; he had risen from a theological to a humane conception of death. He recognises that "If we have known how to live, it is unreasonable to teach us how to die . . . if we have known how to live steadily and quietly, we know how to die in like manner. . . . It is my opinion that it [death] is indeed the close but not the aim of life [*c'est bien le bout, non pourtant le but de la vie*]; it is its end, its extremity, not, however, its object; life should be its own aim and purpose [*elle doibt estre elle mesme à soi sa visée, son dessein*]; its true study is to order and guide it, and patiently to support it [*se souffrir*]. Among the number of several other offices which the general and principal chapter of knowing how to live includes, is this article of knowing how to die, and it is among the lightest, if our fears did not give weight to it." Here we have the mature Montaigne, serene, simple, natural. In this present Essay he was dominated by Seneca; he had not yet shaken off the conventional emotions of his day; he was still *youthful* in mind, though, as he tells us, he was 39 years old.

Regarding the considerations he here turns to as to the common length of life, it is worth observing, as showing the different standard for it in his day and ours, — and not less in his day and earlier (Bible) days, — that he speaks of this age of 39 as beyond the usual term of life. This has a strange sound to our ears. The next point he touches upon is a curious one — the question whether or not the majority of famous men have died before they were 35; and this becomes more interesting when connected with a kindred question that he raises in a later Essay: whether or not the greater number of noble actions on record have been performed before the age of 30 years. He thinks so: "Yes, often in the life of the same man"; that is, even when the same men have lived on to later years.

The greater part of this Essay would seem to have been written somewhere about the date he gives in the course of it — the 15th March, 1572. But in the last part, which is not very closely connected with the rest, he made additions before its publication in 1580. Some discrepancies result; for instance on one page he says: "I have enjoyed to the present time very vigorous health, very seldom interrupted"; on another he says: "When I was well I had much more dread of sicknesses than since I have them." He was attacked by the malady of the stone in 1573; by 1580 he had suffered from it.

From the paragraph beginning "These examples," the chief interest is in observing the action of the essayist's thought, the state of his mind at that time.

There is only a sentence here and there that is worth long remembrance, except the noble address of Nature to Man (imitated from Lucretius) asserting Death to be a part of the constitution of the universe, and largely composed of passages from Seneca. Regarding the rest, we feel with Lord Bacon: "Much of the doctrines of the philosophers seem to me to be more fearful and cautionary than the nature of things requires: thus they increase the fear of death in offering to cure it; for

when they would have a man's whole life be but a discipline or preparation to die, they must needs make men think that it is a terrible enemy, against whom there is no end of preparing." (*Advancement of Learning*, II, 21.5.)

This criticism is of precisely opposite tone to that made by Pascal (*Pensées*), who, speaking directly of Montaigne, says: "His somewhat free and light feelings about some passages of life can be excused, but his wholly pagan feelings about death cannot be excused; for one must relinquish all piety, if one does not desire to die, at least, in a Christian manner; now, throughout his book he has in mind only to die weakly and gently." — No, not *lachement et mollement*, but *quietement et sourdement;* or, in still better phrase, *constamment et tranquillement.*

CICERO says that to think as a philosopher is nothing else than to make ready for death.[1] This is inasmuch as study and contemplation to some degree withdraw our soul outside of us and set it at work apart from the body, which is a sort of apprenticeship and likeness to death; or, indeed, it is because all the wisdom and reasoning in the world finally comes at last to the point of teaching us not to be afraid to die.[2] In truth, either our reason fools itself,[3] or it must aim only at our satisfaction, and the sum of all its labour should tend to make us live rightly and at our ease, as says Holy Writ.[4] All the beliefs in the world agree in this, (*c*) that pleasure is our goal, (*a*) although they take divers means to attain it; otherwise we should reject them at once, for who would listen to that argument which should set our affliction and discomfort as its end?

(*c*) The disagreements of the philosophical sects about this matter are verbal. *Transcurramus solertissimas nugas.*[5] There is more opinionativeness and wrangling than befits so godly a calling. But whatever part in the world's drama a man undertakes to play, he always plays his own nature too.[6] Whatever they may say, in virtue herself the final ob-

[1] See *Tusc. Disp.*, I, 30. In this whole passage Cicero follows very closely the *Phædo* of Plato.

[2] See *Ibid.*, 31.

[3] See Cicero, *De Fin.*, II, 27.

[4] See *Ecclesiastes*, III, 12.

[5] Let us pass quickly over these trifling subtleties. — Seneca, *Epistle* 117.

[6] *Mais quelque personnage que l'home entrepreigne, il joue tousjours le sien parmy.*

ject of our aim is delight.[1] It pleases me to belabour their ears with that word, which is so abhorrent to them; and if it signifies some supreme enjoyment and excessive satisfaction, it is due rather to the assistance of virtue than to any other assistance. This delight, because it is more lusty, vigorous, robust, and virile, is only the more completely delightful; and we should give it the name of pleasure,[2] which is more gracious, more gentle, and more according to its nature, and not that of vigour, by which we have denominated it. That other, baser delight, if it deserved that fair name, would do so only conjointly, not exceptionally. I find it less free from troubles and trammels than virtue is. Besides that its savour is more transitory, unstable, and unreliable, it has its vigils, its fastings, and its labours, and sweat and blood, and also, especially, its poignant sufferings of so many sorts, and, accompanying it, so heavy a satiety, that it is equivalent to a penance. We are in the wrong in thinking that its troubles serve as a spur and seasoning to its sweetness, — as in nature one contrary is vivified by another, — and in saying, when we come to virtue, that similar consequences and difficulties over-burden her and make her austere and inaccessible; whereas much more quickly than in earthly delight, they ennoble, intensify, and heighten the divine and perfect pleasure which she brings us. Surely very unworthy of her acquaintance is he who balances her cost against her fruit, and who knows neither her charms, nor her proper use. They who proceed to instruct us that her quest is hard and laborious, and her possession agreeable, what do they suggest by that, if not that she is always disagreeable? For what human power ever attained to her possession? The most perfect are well content to aspire to her and to approach her without possessing her; but they [3] are mistaken; for of all the pleasures that we know, the very pursuit of them is pleasant. The enterprise is affected by the quality of the thing with which it is concerned, for the quality is a large part of the deed, and is of the same substance.[4]

[1] *Voluptê* = earthly delight.
[2] *Plaisir.*
[3] That is, "they who proceed to instruct us."
[4] *Car c'est une bonne portion de l'effaict, et consubstantielle.*

The happiness and blessedness which shines in virtue fills all her avenues and approaches, even to the first entrance and the furthest gate. Now, among the chief benefactions of virtue is the contempt of death, a means of supplying our life with placid tranquillity and giving to it a pure and agreeable savour, without which all other delight is abolished.

(*a*) That is why all doctrines meet and agree on this article;[1] and although they all with common accord lead us also to despise pain, poverty, and other calamities to which human life is liable, it is not with equal painstaking; not only because these calamities are not of the same necessity (the greater number of men pass their lives without a taste of poverty, and some even without feeling pain or illness, as Xenophilus the musician, who lived a hundred and six years in perfect health[2]), but also because, at the worst, death whenever we please can put an end to all other mishaps, and cut them short. But death itself is inevitable:

> (*b*) Omnes eodem cogimur; omnium
> Versatur urna, serius ocius
> Sors exitura et nos in æternum
> Exsilium impositura cymbæ.[3]

And consequently, if it terrifies us, it is a constant source of anguish, which can in no wise be allayed. (*c*) It may come upon us from everywhere.[4] We may turn our heads incessantly this way and that, as in a suspicious country: *quæ quasi saxum Tantalo semper impendet.*[5] (*a*) Our parliaments often send criminals back for execution to the place where the crime was committed; on the road, take them to fine houses, give them all the good cheer you please, —

[1] In 1580–1588, *Voylà pourquoy toutes les sectes des philosophes . . . à cet article de nous instruire à la mespriser.*

[2] See Pliny, *Natural History*, VII, 51.

[3] We are all driven to the same end; for all of us our lot is shaken in the urn, and sooner or later will come forth to launch us on our everlasting exile. — Horace, *Odes*, II, 3.25.

[4] See Seneca, *Epistle* 74.

[5] This, like the rock of Tantalus, ever hangs overhead. — Cicero, *De Fin.*, I, 18.

(*b*) non Siculæ dapes
Dulcem elaborabunt saporem,
Non avium cytharæque cantus
Somnum reducent,[1] —

(*a*) do you think that they could be gladdened by it, and that the final purpose of their journey, being all the time before their eyes, has not weakened and destroyed their taste for all those enjoyments?

(*b*) Audit iter, numeratque dies, spacioque viarum
Metitur vitam, torquetur peste futura.[2]

(*a*) The end of our career is death; it is the unavoidable object of our vision; if it terrifies us, how is it possible to go a step forward without trembling? The remedy of the common people is not to think about it. But from what brutish stupidity can they derive such gross blindness! It makes them put the bridle on the ass's tail, —

Qui capite ipse suo instituit vestigia retro.[3]

It is no wonder that they are so often caught in the trap. Such people are terrified by only hearing death named, and most of them cross themselves as at the name of the devil. And because it is mentioned in testaments, do not expect them to put their hand thereto until the doctor has pronounced their final doom; and then, betwixt pain and fear, God knows with what excellent judgement they cook it[4] up!

(*b*) Because that syllable struck their ears too harshly, and that word seemed to them of evil omen, the Romans had learned to soften it, or to stretch it out by periphrases. Instead of saying, "He is dead," they said, "He has ceased to live," "He has lived." [5] So long as it is life, even past life,

[1] Not the banquets of Sicily will produce a sweet taste, nor will the songs of birds and of the lyre bring back sleep. — Horace, *Odes*, III, 1.18.

[2] He asks about the route and counts the days, and measures his life by the length of the road; he is tortured by the coming calamity. — Claudian, *In Rufinum*, II, 137.

[3] Who places himself with the head where his feet should be. — Lucretius, IV, 472.

[4] That is, the testament.

[5] See Plutarch, *Life of Cicero*.

they are consoled. We have borrowed from them our *feu* [1] Master Jehan. (*a*) Is it, perchance, that, as the saying goes, the delay is worth the money?

I was born between eleven o'clock and noon, on the last day of February one thousand five hundred thirty-three, as we reckon nowadays, beginning the year in January.[2] It was just fifteen days ago that I completed my thirty-ninth year; I need at least as many more. Meanwhile, to trouble oneself with thoughts of a thing so distant would be folly. But see how it is! the young and the old leave life in the same condition.[3] (*c*) No one goes hence otherwise than as if he were to return forthwith. (*a*) Moreover, there is no man so decrepit that, so long as he has Methuselah before him, he does not think that he still has twenty years in his body. Furthermore, poor fool that you are, who has fixed the limits of your life? You rely on the tales of doctors. Look rather at fact and experience. By the common run of things you have lived long already by extraordinary good fortune. You have passed the accustomed term of life; and that it is so, count up how many more of your acquaintance have died before your present age than have attained it. And even of those who have ennobled their lives by winning renown — make a list of them, and I wager that I shall find more who died before the age of thirty-five than after.[4] It is truly reasonable and pious to take example even from the human existence of Jesus Christ: now, his life ended at three-and-thirty years. The greatest man who was a mere man, Alexander, also died at the same age.[5]

[1] *Feu*, deceased, or, as we say, "late." The derivation of the word is uncertain, whether from the Latin *functus* (deceased), or, through the Italian, from the Latin *fuit* (he was). According to Hatzfeld and Darmesteter, from the vulgar Latin *fatutus:* who has fulfilled his destiny (*fatum*).

[2] In 1565 Charles IX of France decreed that the year should begin on January 1, instead of at Easter; but the decree was not carried into effect until two years later.

[3] The editions of 1580–1588 add: *y pensent aussi peu les uns que les autres.*

[4] Montaigne reasserts this belief in the Essay "Of Age," Book I, chap. 57.

[5] In 1580 and 1582 we have, *et ce fameux Mahumet aussi.*

How many ways of surprising us Death has!

> Quid quisque vitet, nunquam homini satis
> Cautum est in horas.[1]

I say nothing of fevers and pleurisies. Who would ever have thought that a duke of Bretaigne would be stifled by the crowd, as he was at the entry into Lyons of Pope Clement, my neighbour?[2] Have you not known of one of our kings killed while jousting?[3] and did not one of his ancestors die from being jostled by a hog?[4] To no purpose did Æschylus, when threatened with the fall of a house, remain out-of-doors;[5] lo, he was killed by a tortoise-shell that fell from the claws of an eagle in the air.[6] Another died from a grape-seed;[7] an emperor from the scratch of a comb in dressing his hair; Æmilius Lepidus from stumbling over his threshold, and Aufidius from hitting against the door of the council chamber as he went in.[8] And while lying with women, Cornelius Gallus, prætor; Tigillinus, captain of the watch at Rome; Ludovic, son of Guy de Gonzague, Marquis of Mantua; and, of even worse example, Speusippus the Platonic philosopher, and one of our popes.[9] Poor Bebius, a judge,

[1] What is to be avoided from hour to hour, man never sufficiently foresees. — Horace, *Odes*, II, 13.13.

[2] This was Bertrand de Got, Archbishop of Bordeaux, Pope from 1305 to 1314, under the name of Clement V. Montaigne jestingly calls him "my neighbour" because he was of Bordeaux. The Duc de Bretaigne was Jean II, died 1305. Montaigne took this from *Les diverses leçons* of Pierre de Messie, translated from the Spanish in 1552 by Claude Gruget. The original work was published ten years earlier.

[3] Henri II, in 1559.

[4] Philippe, son of Louis le Gros: his horse was frightened by a hog. See Jean Bouchet, *Annales d'Aquitaine*.

[5] *A l'airre* (1580–1588); *à l'airte* (*Éd. Mun.*). This phrase was borrowed from the Italian *all'erte* (on the height), and was used in the sense that Montaigne gives it, by Baïf and others.

[6] This legend came originally from Valerius Maximus, IX, 12, *ext.* 2; but Montaigne apparently took it from the *Officina* of Ravisius Textor, one of the "compilations" of his time.

[7] Anacreon. See Valerius Maximus, IX, 12, *ext.* 8.

[8] These last three instances are taken from Pliny, *Natural History*, VII, 33 and 53.

[9] John XXII. The names of these five, and the manner of their deaths, are taken from Ravisius Textor, *Officina*.

was seized as he was granting an extension of bail, his own [extension] of life having expired; and Caius Julius, a physician, while he was anointing a patient's eyes, lo, death closed his own.[1] And, if I must bring myself in, a brother of mine, Captain St. Martin, twenty-three years of age, who had already given good proof of his worth, while playing at tennis received a blow from a ball which struck him just above the right ear, with no bruise or wound. He did not sit down or stop playing; but five or six hours later he died of a stroke of apoplexy caused by that blow. While such examples as these occur so frequently and familiarly before our eyes, is it possible that we can get rid of the thought of death, and that it should not every moment seem as if he may clutch us by the collar?[2] What does it matter, you will say, how that may be, so long as we give ourselves no trouble about it? I am of this opinion,[3] and in whatever manner one can find shelter from blows, were it in the skin of a calf, I am not the man to refuse it; for it suffices me to hold my course in ease; and the best way that I can play my cards, I use,[4] as little praiseworthy and exemplary it may be as you please.

> Prætulerim . . . delirus inersque videri,
> Dum mea delectent mala me, vel denique fallant,
> Quam sapere et ringi.[5]

[1] Bebius and Caius Julius, as well as Cornelius Gallus (above), are found in a longer list given by Pliny, *Natural History*, VII, 53.

[2] This last clause well illustrates the difference between French and English usage in the matters of gender. In such impersonal expressions as "it seems," where the neuter pronoun is always used in English, the French use the masculine pronoun: "*il* me semble." Again, all nouns in French being either masculine or feminine, the pronoun always follows in gender the noun for which it stands; whereas in English we personify certain nouns as masculine or feminine according to no fixed rule. *Mort* (death) being feminine, the feminine pronoun *elle* is always used; while if we personify Death, we always speak of it as "he."

[3] That is, that it does not matter. Compare Montaigne's change of note in the later Essay, Book III, chap. 12

[4] *Le meilleur jeu que je me puis donner, je le prens.*

[5] I would rather appear foolish and feeble, provided that my weaknesses gave me pleasure, or, at least, that I were not aware of them, than be wise and uncomfortable. — Horace, *Epistles*, II, 2.126.

But it is madness to think of arriving where one desires by that road. Men go and come, they gad about and dance — of death, no thought. That is all very fine; but when death comes to them, or to their wives, children, or friends, surprising them suddenly [1] and defenceless, what anguish, what shrieks, what frenzy, and what despair overwhelms them! Saw you ever any thing so cast down, so changed, so bewildered? We must provide against it earlier; and such brutish thoughtlessness, if it could lodge in the head of a man of intelligence, — which I deem altogether impossible, — sells us its merchandise too dear. If it were an enemy that could be avoided, I would advise borrowing the arms of cowardice; but since it is such a one as can not be avoided, (*b*) since it overtakes you running away and a coward, as it does a worthy man, —

(*a*) Nempe et fugacem persequitur virum,
Nec parcit imbellis juventæ
Poplitibus timidoque tergo; [2]

(*b*) since the best cuirass does not protect you, —

Ille licet ferro cautus se condat ære,
Mors tamen inclusum protrahet inde caput, [3] —

(*a*) let us learn to meet it firmly and to combat it; and, to begin by depriving it of its greatest advantage over us, let us adopt a course just contrary to the usual one. Let us deprive it of its unfamiliarity, let us live with it, let us habituate ourselves to it; let us think of nothing so often as of death; let us constantly place it before our imaginations and in all its aspects; at the stumbling of a horse, at the fall of a tile, at the slightest prick of a pin, let us immediately reflect: Well, what if this were death itself? and thereupon let us stiffen and strengthen ourselves. [4] Amid

[1] *En dessoude;* from *de* and *soude*, a variant of *soudain*.

[2] And assuredly it pursues the man who flees and does not spare the hamstrings and the timid back of cowardly young men. — Horace, *Odes*, III, 2.14. The original has in the first line *Mors* instead of *Nempe*.

[3] He may protect himself prudently with iron and bronze; none the less, death drags his head forth from its encasement. — Propertius, III, 18.25.

[4] Cf. Seneca, *Epistle* 4.

festivals and merry-making, let us be always restrained by the remembrance of our condition, and let us not be so carried away by pleasure but that at times our memory recalls in how many ways this lightheartedness of ours is exposed to death, and with how many modes of attack death threatens. So did the Egyptians, who, at the height of their festivals, and amid their best cheer, used to have the skeleton of a man brought in, as a warning to the guests.[1]

> Omnem crede diem tibi diluxisse supremum;
> Grata superveniet, quæ non sperabitur hora.[2]

It is uncertain where death awaits us; let us await it everywhere.[3] Prevision of death is prevision of liberty. He who has learned to die has unlearned servitude. To know how to die frees us from all subjection and compulsion. (*c*) There is nothing evil in life for him who clearly understands that the loss of life is not an evil.[4] (*a*) Paulus Æmilius replied to the messenger whom that wretched king of Macedonia,[5] his prisoner, sent to him to beg that he would not carry him in his triumph, "Let him make the request to himself."

In truth, in all things, if Nature does not help a little, it is very hard for art and endeavour to go far. I am myself not melancholy, but given to serious dreaming;[6] there is nothing with which I have always been more occupied than with thoughts of death; yes, even in the most wanton season of my days, —

(*b*) Jucundum cum ætas florida ver ageret,[7] —

(*a*) among ladies and in games it was thought that I was occupied in inwardly considering some suspicion, or an uncertain hope, when I was thinking about some one, whoever

[1] See Plutarch, *Banquet of the Seven Sages;* Herodotus, II, 78.

[2] Think of each day that shines upon you as your last; the unhoped-for hours will be welcome when they come. — Horace, *Epistles*, I, 4.13.

[3] This and the four sentences following are taken from Seneca, *Epistle* 26.

[4] See Idem, *Epistle* 78.

[5] Perseus. See Plutarch, *Life of Paulus Æmilius.*

[6] *Songecreux.*

[7] When my flowering life was in its pleasant spring. — Catullus, LXVIII, 16.

it might be, who had been lately seized upon by a high fever and by death, when leaving a similar festivity, and with his head full of trifles and love and gaiety, like myself; and that I had as much to answer for.[1]

(*b*) Jam fuerit, nec post unquam revocare licebit.[2]

(*a*) I no more scowled at that thought than at another. It is not possible that at the outset we should not feel stings from such thoughts; but by handling them and going over them again and again, we are sure to make them tractable in the long run; otherwise, for my part, I should be in a constant terror and frenzy; for never was man so distrustful of his life, never did man count less on its duration. My health, which has hitherto been very robust and infrequently interrupted, does not lengthen my expectation, nor do illnesses shorten it. Every moment it seems to me that I come through safely; (*c*) and I reiterate to myself incessantly: "Whatever can happen another day, can happen to-day."[3] (*a*) In truth, risks and perils bring us little, or not at all, nearer our end; and if we think how, besides the danger that seems most to threaten us, there are millions of others hanging over our heads, we shall find that, lusty or fever-stricken, at sea or in our houses, in battle or at rest, it is equally near to us.[4] (*c*) *Nemo altero fragilior est: nemo in crastinum sui certior.*[5] (*a*) What I have to do before I die, any amount of leisure seems to me short to accomplish it, were it but an hour's work. Some one, turning over my tablets the other day, found a memorandum of something that I wished to have done after my death. I told him — and it was true — that, being only a league from my house, and sound and hearty, I had made haste to write that down because I was not sure of reaching home. (*c*) As one who is constantly brooding over his thoughts, and imprinting them on his mind, I am at all hours prepared as much as I can be so; and

[1] *Et qu'autant m'en pendoit à l'oreille.*

[2] Soon [the present] will be the past, never to be recalled. — Lucretius, III, 915.

[3] *Tout ce qui peut estre faict une autre jour, le peut estre aujourd'hui.*

[4] Cf. Seneca, *Epistle* 49.

[5] No man is more frail than another, no man more certain of his morrow. — Idem, *Epistle* 91.

the sudden coming of death will admonish me of nothing new. (*a*) We must be always booted and ready to depart, so far as lies in us, and, above all, look to it that we have no business then except with ourselves.

(*b*) Quid brevi fortes jaculamur ævo
Multa? [1]

(*a*) For we shall have enough work then without surplusage. One man bewails, more than for death itself, that it breaks off the progress of a glorious victory; another, that he must leave his lodging before he has married his daughter or arranged for the education of his children. One deplores the loss of the company of his wife, another of that of his son, as chief pleasures of his existence. (*c*) I am at this hour in such a state, God be praised, that I can dislodge whenever it may please him, without regret for anything whatsoever, if it be not for life itself, if its loss begins to be important to me.[2] I am untying myself from all things; my farewells are now said to every one save myself. Never did man prepare to leave this world more wholly and entirely, or to detach himself from it more completely, than I endeavour to do.[3]

(*b*) Miser, o miser, aiunt, omnia ademit
Una dies infesta mihi tot præmia vitæ.[4]

(*a*) And the builder: —

Manent [he says] opera interrupta minæque
Murorum ingentes.[5]

We must not plan any thing requiring so long a breath, or, at

[1] Why, in so short a life, make so many plans? — Horace, *Odes*, II, 16.17.

[2] The last words, from "if it be not," are found only in the *Édition Municipale.*

[3] The edition of 1595 adds: *Les plus mortes morts sont les plus saines.* (The deadest deaths are the most healthful.) This puzzling sentence is not found in the *Édition Municipale.*

[4] "Oh, wretched, wretched man that I am!" they say; "one hostile day has taken everything from me — all that life has won." — Lucretius, III, 898. The usual reading is *misero misere aiunt.*

[5] The works remain broken off, and the great walls of threatening height. — Virgil, *Æneid*, IV, 88. The original has *pendent* instead of *manent.*

least, not with the idea of being distressed if we do not see the end of it.[1] We are born to act [and I am of opinion that not only an emperor, as Vespasian said, but every high-spirited man ought to die standing up].[2]

Cum moriar, medium solvar et inter opus.[3]

I desire that a man should act, (*c*) and prolong the employments of life as long as he can, (*a*) and that death may find me planting my cabbages, but indifferent regarding it, and even more regarding my unfinished garden. I have seen a man die, who, when he was at the last gasp, incessantly complained because his fate cut the thread of the history he had in hand of the fifteenth or sixteenth of our kings.

(*b*) Illud in his rebus non addunt, nec tibi earum
Jam desiderium rerum super insidet una.[4]

(*a*) We must get rid of such ordinary and harmful ideas. Just as our cemeteries have been laid out adjoining the churches and in the most frequented part of the towns, in order, as Lycurgus said,[5] to accustom the lower classes, the women and children, not to take fright at the sight of a dead body, and that the constant spectacle of bones and tombs and funerals might warn us of our condition —

(*b*) Quin etiam exhilarare viris convivia cæde
Mos olim, et miscere epulis spectacula dira
Certantum ferro, sæpe et super ipsa cadentum
Pocula, respersis non parco sanguine mensis;[6]

[1] The *Édition Municipale* has *pour n'en voir la fin;* all other texts, *pour en voir la fin.*

[2] The passage in brackets is omitted in the *Édition Municipale* and in 1595.

[3] When I die, may I find my release in the midst of my work and surrounded by it. — Ovid, *Amores*, II, 10.36.

[4] They do not add thereto: "Neither does there now remain in your mind any longing for these things." — Lucretius, III, 900.

[5] See Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus.*

[6] Once it was the custom to enliven a banquet for the revellers by carnage, and to combine with the feast the horrible spectacle of fighting swordsmen, who often fell over the cups, and the tables were splashed with blood.— Silius Italicus, XI, 51. Montaigne took it from J. Lipsius, *Saturnalium sermonum libri duo*, I, 6.

(*c*) and as the Egyptians, after their festivals, caused a great image of death to be exhibited to the guests by one who cried: "Drink and enjoy yourselves, for when dead you will be like this," [1] (*a*) so I have fallen into the habit of having death constantly, not in my mind alone, but on my lips; and there is nothing of which I enquire so eagerly as of the deaths of men, what words they said, what their expression was, and their bearing; nor are there any passages in histories which I read so carefully. (*c*) This appears by my cramming these pages with examples; and that I have a special fondness for this sort of matter. Were I a maker of books, I should make an annotated record of different deaths.[2] He who should teach men how to die would teach them how to live. Dicearchus [3] made a book with a similar title, but with another and less useful purpose.

(*a*) I shall be told that the thing itself goes so far beyond one's idea of it, that the best fencing is at a loss when one reaches that point. Let them say what they will: to think upon it beforehand unquestionably gives one a great advantage; [4] and then, too, is it nothing to go so far as that without emotion and without trembling? Yet more: [5] Nature herself lends us a hand and gives us courage. If it be a sudden and violent death, we have no time to dread it; if it be otherwise, I perceive that, in proportion as I become sick, I feel involuntarily some contempt of life.[6] I find that I have much more difficulty in swallowing the thought of death when I am in health than I have when I am sick, inasmuch as I no longer cling so closely to the pleasures of life, since I begin to lose the habit and enjoyment of them; then I look upon death with a much less terrified vision. This makes me hope that the further I shall draw away from life

[1] See Herodotus, II, 78. Cf. p. 114 *supra*.

[2] See such lists in Pliny, *Natural History*, VII; Valerius Maximus, IX, 12; also Rabelais, IV, 18.

[3] A philosophical writer — a pupil of Aristotle. See Cicero, *De Off.*, II, 5.

[4] This is an idea that constantly recurs in Seneca's letters.

[5] The editions of 1580–1588 add: *Je reconnoy par experience que.*

[6] Cf. the Essays, "Of Experience" (Book II, chap. 6), and "Of the Resemblance of Children to their Fathers" (Book II, chap. 37), near the beginning.

and the nearer I approach to death, the more easily I shall accept the exchange. Just as I have experienced on several occasions the truth of what Cæsar says,[1] that things often appear greater to us at a distance than close at hand, so I have found that when well I have had much more horror of maladies than when I have been touched by them. My lightheartedness, my enjoyment, and my vigour make the other condition [2] appear to me so utterly disproportionate to this, that in imagination I magnify its discomforts by half, and fancy them more burdensome than I find them when I have them on my shoulders; I hope that it will be so for me with death.

(*b*) See how Nature, in the ordinary changes and impairments that we undergo, takes from us the perception of our loss and our waning powers. What is left to an old man of the vigour of his youth and his past years?

Heu! senibus vitæ portio quanta manet.[3]

(*c*) To a worn-out and broken soldier of his guard who came to him in the street and asked his leave to kill himself, Cæsar, observing his decrepit aspect, replied jestingly: "Do you think then that you are living?" [4] (*b*) Were we to fall into it suddenly, I do not think that we should be capable of enduring such a change; but, led by her [5] hand, down a gentle and, as it were, imperceptible descent, little by little, step by step, she impels us into that wretched state and enures us to it, so that we feel no shock when our youth dies in us, which is essentially and in truth a sterner death than is the utter death of a languishing life, and than is death in old age; because the leap from half-existence to non-existence is not so great as from a pleasant and flourishing existence to a painful and grievous one. (*a*) The bent and bowed body has less strength to sustain a burden; so likewise our soul: we must train her and educate her to meet the force of this adversary.

[1] In *De Bello Gallico*, VII, 84.

[2] That is, illness.

[3] Alas! how small a portion of life remains for the old! — Maximianus (or Pseudo-Gallus), *Elegies*, I, 16.

[4] Seneca (*Epistle* 77) tells this, not of a soldier, but of an old prisoner.

[5] That is, Nature's.

For, as it is impossible for her to be at ease while she stands in fear of death, on the other hand, if she be reassured, she can boast (which is something surpassing, as it were, the human state) that it is impossible that anxiety, anguish, fear, nay, even the least annoyance, should lodge with her:

(*b*) Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit solida; neque Auster
Dux inquieti turbidus Adriæ,
Nec fulminantis magna Iovis manus.[1]

(*a*) She has made herself mistress of her passions and lusts, mistress of destitution, shame, poverty, and all other buffets of Fortune. Let those of us who can, gain this superiority: here is the real and sovereign liberty, which gives us the power to snap our fingers [2] at force and injustice, and to laugh at prison-bars and fetters: [3] —

in manicis et
Compedibus sævo te sub custode tenebo.
Ipse Deus, simul atque volam, me solvet. Opinor,
Hoc sentit: Moriar; mors ultima linea rerum est.[4]

Our religion has had no more solid human basis than contempt of life. Not only do reasonable considerations [5] lead us to this: for why should we dread the loss of a thing which, when lost, can not be regretted? And since we are threatened by so many ways of dying, is there not more harm in dreading them all than in enduring one of them? [6] (*c*) What does it matter when it happens, since it is inevitable? To him who said to Socrates, "The thirty tyrants have sentenced you to

[1] Neither the countenance of a threatening tyrant, nor Auster, the boisterous ruler of the stormy Adriatic, nor the mighty hand of thunder-hurling Jupiter can shake his firm soul. — Horace, *Odes*, III, 3.3.

[2] *Faire la figue.*

[3] Cf. Seneca, *Epistle* 26, at the end.

[4] "I will hold you captive in fetters and shackles, under the eye of a pitiless jailer." "A god himself will set me free as soon as I so desire." He means this, I suppose: "I shall die. Death is the end and goal of all things." — Horace, *Epistles*, I, 16.76. A figurative allusion to chariot races is intended. The *alba linea* marked the goal of the race.

[5] *Le discours de la raison.*

[6] See St. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, I, 11.54.

death," he replied, "And Nature them." [1] What folly, to distress ourselves on the subject of the passage to exemption from all distress! As our birth brought to us the birth of all things, so will our death the death of all things. Wherefore it is no less foolish to weep because we shall not be living a hundred years hence than to weep because we were not living a hundred years ago.[2] Death is the beginning of another life. Thus we wept; thus it was painful for us to enter into this life; thus did we divest ourselves of our former veil on entering into it.[3] Nothing can be grievous which happens but once. Is it reasonable to fear so long a thing so brief? A long life and a short life are made quite the same by death, for long and short are not of things that have ceased to be. Aristotle says that there are tiny things on the river Hypanis that live only one day.[4] The one that dies at eight o'clock in the morning dies in youth; the one that dies at five in the evening dies in decrepitude. Who of us does not find it amusing to see this moment of duration considered as good or ill fortune? The greater or the less length of our lives, if we compare it to eternity, or even to the duration of mountains and rivers and stars and trees, and even of some animals, is no less absurd.

(*a*) But Nature forces us to it.[5] "Go from this world," she says, "as you came into it. The same transition that you

[1] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Socrates*. In the passage of Laertius from which Montaigne took this, there is previously a mention of the thirty tyrants, by which he was misled. The thirty tyrants had fallen four years before the death of Socrates. It was the Athenians, as Laertius says, who decreed his death.

[2] See Seneca, *Epistle* 77.

[3] *Ainsi nous despouillames nous de nostre ancien voile en y entrant.*

[4] See Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, I, 39.

[5] This refers back to the sentence a few lines above: "Is there not more harm in dreading them all than in enduring one of them?" The following pages, almost to the end of the chapter, are reminiscent of the famous passage in the third book of Lucretius (near the end). It may be observed that in 1580 Montaigne's text in this Essay was built up on borrowings from Lucretius, illustrated and filled out by translations of Seneca. The additions of 1588 are chiefly from Lucretius. Those of the *Édition Municipale* are almost all from Seneca. Very often the sentences in French following the quotations from Lucretius are paraphrases of connecting lines not quoted.

made from death to life, without suffering and without fear, make it again from life to death. Your death is one of the parts of the order of the universe; it is a part of the life of the world";

(*b*) inter se mortales mutua vivunt
Et quasi cursores vitaï lampada tradunt.[1]

(*a*) "Shall I change for you the admirable arrangement of things? [2] Death is the condition of your creation, it is a portion of yourself; you fly from yourself.[3] This existence of yours, which you have the enjoyment of, is equally divided between death and life. The day of your birth starts your steps toward dying as well as toward living."

Prima, quæ vitam dedit, hora, carpsit.[4]

Nascentes morimur, finisque ab origine pendet.[5]

(*c*) All the time you live you purloin from life; it is at its expense. The continual work of your life is to build up death. You are in death while you are in life, for death has passed when you have ceased to be in life. Or, if you like it better in this way, you are dead after life; but during life you are dying; and death treats the dying much more roughly than the dead, and more acutely and essentially.[6]

(*b*) If you have profited by your life, you have had enough of it; [7] go hence content.

Cur non ut plenus vitæ conviva recedis? [8]

If you have not known how to make use of it, if it was use-

[1] Mortals live mutually dependent, and like runners pass on the torch of life. — Lucretius, II, 76, 79.

[2] The text here is of peculiar grammatical construction: *Changeray-je pas pour vous cette belle contexture des choses.*

[3] That is, in shunning it.

[4] The first hour that gave us life shortened our life. — Seneca, *Hercules Furens*, Act III, 874.

[5] From our birth we die, and our end hangs upon our beginning. — Manilius, *Astronomica*, IV, 16.

[6] The phrase *Et ne mouriez jamais trop tost* stood here in 1580, but was dropped in 1588.

[7] See Lucretius, III, 935.

[8] Why do you not depart like a guest who has had enough of life? — Idem, 938.

less to you, what does it matter to you to have lost it? wherefore do you still desire it?

Cur amplius addere quæris
Rursum quod pereat male, et ingratum occidat omne?[1]

(*c*) Life is in itself neither good nor evil: it is the seat of good and evil according as you dispose it.[2] (*a*) And if you have lived one day, you have seen every thing: one day is equal to all days. There is no other light, there is no other darkness. This sun, this moon, these stars, the whole disposition of the heavens is the same which your ancestors enjoyed and which will be unchanged for your distant descendants.

(*c*) Non alium videre patres; aliumve nepotes
Aspicient.[3]

(*a*) And, at the utmost, the division and variety of all the acts of my comedy are completed in a year. If you have taken heed to the movement of my four seasons, they embrace the childhood, the youth, the manhood, and the old age of the earth. It has played its game; it knows no other trick than to begin again; it will be always the same: —

(*b*) Versamur ibidem, atque insumus usque,[4]

Atque in se sua per vestigia volvitur annus.[5]

(*a*) I have no intention of manufacturing new pastimes for you.

Nam tibi præterea quod machiner, inveniamque
Quod placeat, nihil est; eadem sunt omnia semper.[6]

Give place to others as others have done to you.

[1] Why desire to add to the length of that which will again come to an evil end and will altogether perish unavailingly? — Lucretius, III, 941.

[2] See Seneca, *Epistle* 99.

[3] Your fathers saw no other things, nor will your sons behold anything different. — Manilius, I, 522. Montaigne took this quotation from Vivès's Commentary on St. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, XI, 4.

[4] We turn, ever enclosed in the same circle. — Lucretius, III, 1080.

[5] And the year returns, circling in its own track. — Virgil, *Georgics*, II, 402.

[6] For there is nothing else that I can devise or find that can please you: all things are the same always. — Lucretius, III, 944.

(*c*) Equality is the chief part of equity.[1] Who can complain of being included where all are included? However long you may live, you will thereby subtract nothing from the time that you must be dead; it is all for naught; you will be as long in that state which you dread as if you had died in infancy.[2]

> Licet, quod vis, vivendo vincere secla,
> Mors æterna tamen nihilominus illa manebit.[3]

(*b*) And truly I shall put you in such a condition that you will have no discontent:—

> In vera nescis nullum fore morte alium te,
> Qui possit vivus tibi te lugere peremptum,
> Stansque jacentem;[4]

neither will you desire the life which you so bewail.

> Nec sibi enim quisquam tum se vitamque requirit.
> Nec desiderium nostri nos afficit ullum.[5]

Death is less to be feared than nothing, if there be any thing less than nothing:—

> multo mortem minus ad nos esse putandum,
> Si minus esse potest quam quod nihil esse videmus.[6]

(*c*) It concerns you neither dead nor living: living, because you are existing; dead, because you no longer are.[7] (*a*) No man dies before his hour; what amount of time you leave

[1] See Seneca, *Epistle* 30.

[2] Cf. Lucretius, III, 1087–1089, 1092–1094.

[3] Live as long as you will, conquering time; eternal death will yet no less remain. — Idem, III, 1090.

[4] Thou dost not see that in true death there will be no other self which, living and standing by thy prostrate body, can mourn to thyself thy extinction. — Idem, III, 885. In the original text, line 885 reads: —

> Nec videt in vera nullum fore morte alium se.

[5] For then no man feels the want of his own life. Nor are we affected by any regard for ourselves. — Idem, III, 919, 922.

[6] We must account death to be much less to us, if indeed there can be less than what we see to be nothing. — Idem, III, 926. Translated by Montaigne before quoting.

[7] Cf. Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, I, 38.

behind was no more yours than what passed before you were born,[1] (*b*) and concerns you no more.

> Respice enim quam nil ad nos ante acta vetustas
> Temporis æterni fuerit.[2]

(*a*) Wherever your life ends, it is all there.[3] (*c*) The usefulness of living is not in length of time, but in its use.[4] A man may have lived long who has lived little.[5] Look well to life whilst you are in life. It depends on your will, not on the number of your years, whether you have lived long enough.[6] (*a*) Did you think that you were never to arrive where you were always going? (*c*) There is no road that has not its end.[7] (*a*) And if companionship can comfort you, does not all the world go the same way that you go?

> (*b*) Omnia te vita perfuncta sequentur.[8]

(*a*) Does not every thing dance your dance? Is there any thing which does not grow old with you? A thousand men, a thousand beasts, and a thousand other creatures die at the same instant that you die.[9]

> (*b*) Nam nox nulla diem, neque noctem aurora secuta est,
> Quæ non audierit mistos vagitibus ægris
> Ploratus, mortis comites et funeris atri.[10]

(*c*) Wherefore do you recoil if you can not go back?[11] You have seen many men who have found it well to die, thus

[1] See Seneca, *Epistle* 69.

[2] For consider, how as nothing to us is the bygone antiquity of old times. — Lucretius, III, 972.

[3] See Seneca, *Epistle* 77.

[4] See Idem, *Epistle* 49.

[5] See Idem, *Consolatio ad Marciam*, 20, and *Epistle* 93.

[6] See Idem, *Epistle* 61.

[7] See Idem, *Epistle* 77.

[8] All things, when they have done with life, will follow thee. — Lucretius, III, 968.

[9] See Seneca, *Epistle* 77.

[10] For night has never followed day, nor dawn night, without hearing the sound of lamentation and plaintive wailings, the companions of death and of the sad funeral rites. — Lucretius, II, 578.

[11] See Seneca, *Epistle* 107, where Seneca gives a Latin translation of the so-called "Prayer of Cleanthes" (the Stoic philosopher), which expresses more or less this same thought.

avoiding great calamities.[1] But any one who has found himself badly off from death — have you seen such a one? Surely it is great folly to condemn a thing that you have never experienced, either by yourself or by another. Why do you complain of me and of fate? Do we wrong you? Is it for you to govern us, or for us to govern you? Although your age may not be finished, your life is.[2] A small man is as whole a man as a large one. Neither men nor their lives are measured by the ell. Chiron refused immortality when informed of its conditions by the very god of time and duration, his father Saturn.[3] Imagine, in fact, how much less endurable and more toilsome to man an everlasting life would be, than the life that I have given him. If you had not death, you would incessantly curse me for having deprived you of it. I have purposely mingled something of bitterness with it, to prevent you, seeing how advantageous it is, from embracing it too greedily and unadvisedly. To establish you in this moderate course, of neither flying from life nor shunning death, which I demand of you, I have modified both with sweetness and with bitterness. I taught Thales, the first of your wise men, that to live or to die was indifferent; wherefore he replied very wisely to one who asked him why, then, he did not die, "Because it is a matter of indifference."[4] Water, earth, air, fire, and other elements of this edifice of mine, are no more instruments of your life than of your death.[5] Why do you fear your last day? It contributes no more to your death than does each of the other days. The last step does not cause lassitude: it manifests it. All days go toward death; the last day arrives there.[6]

(*a*) Such are the good counsels of our mother Nature. I have often reflected why in war the face of death, whether we see it in ourselves or in others, seems incomparably less appalling than in our houses (otherwise the army would consist of physicians and wailers); and, death being always one and the same thing, why there is always much more composure among peasants and those of low estate than among

[1] See Seneca, *Epistle* 91. [2] See Idem, *Epistle* 93.
[3] See Lucian, *Dialogues of the Dead*, XXVI.
[4] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Thales*.
[5] See Seneca, *Epistle* 117. [6] See Idem, *Epistle* 120.

others. I believe, truly, that it is the fear-inspiring visages and paraphernalia with which we surround death which frighten us more than the thing itself: a wholly new form of life, the outcries of mothers, wives, and children, the visits of surprised and grief-stricken friends, the presence of a number of pale-faced, weeping servants, a darkened room, lighted candles, our bedside besieged by physicians and preachers — in short, all about us horror and dismay. Lo, we are already shrouded and interred. Children are afraid even of their friends when they see them masked; so it is with us.[1] We must remove the mask from things as from persons. When it is removed, we shall find underneath only the selfsame death that a man-servant or mere chamber-maid met but now without fear.[2] Fortunate is that death which allows no time for the preparation of such an array.

CHAPTER XXI

OF THE POWER OF THE IMAGINATION

Again the first page is interesting from our interest in Montaigne personally. It was added in 1595. The next following ones may be skipped as simply illustrating the power of credulity in the matter of physical marvels, which Montaigne possessed in common with his contemporaries — which was a part of the ignorance of the age. But when he says, "Some attribute the scars of King Dagobert and of Saint Francis to the power of imagination," we find here one of those thoughts of an entirely modern character which are frequent with him. The next sentence, "It is said that by it bodies are sometimes lifted from their places," might have served as a motto a generation ago for the Theosophists. But he is in the truth when he says ("Of Custom," p. 149 *infra*), "Miracles exist from our ignorance of Nature, not in Nature herself."

In this Essay, as sometimes elsewhere, Montaigne carries his habitual frankness of speech to an extreme. He recounts some questionable physiological phenomena caused by the force of the imagination, and does not hesitate to call things by their names. It is to be remembered that refinement of language was not insisted upon in his day, and that, in the minds of his contemporaries, his freedom would excite no surprise or displeasure.

There is a passage of intelligent observation about animals, which are subject, like ourselves, to the power of imagination; but his discourse on

[1] See Seneca, *Epistle* 24.

[2] See *Ibid.*

beasts goes on to include some marvellous tales, resembling those we shall have to deal with later in the "Apology"; and about these he divests himself of responsibility by closing with a "So they say. For the anecdotes that I borrow, I refer them to the consciences of those from whom I receive them." He regards his conclusions as founded on reason — as having, as it were, a sort of *a priori* truth; and if these examples happen to be false, and do not therefore strengthen his arguments, then let some one else find others that do; there must be plenty of them, he thinks: "If I do not rightly comment on them, let another comment for me." The last paragraph of the Essay adds Plutarch's authority to this theory of the slightness of connection between a text and its illustrations. All the last page was added in 1595.

To return, for a moment, to an earlier page (139): where he now says: "Some one saw lately at my home a cat watching a bird," he said in 1580, not "some one," but "My father saw one day" — a pleasant little picture of the elder Montaigne walking in his garden with open eyes. And he says that all this Essay — "this vagary" — has arisen from a tale told him "by an apothecary in the household of my late father."

Very original and interesting considerations of the historical truth in his own writings conclude the Essay.

FORTIS *imaginatio generat casum*,[1] say the men of learning. I am one of those persons who feel a very great force in the imagination; (*c*) every one is aware of the shock, but some are overthrown by it.[2] Its thrust transpierces me, and my art is to elude it, for lack of strength to resist it. I should live in the company only of healthy and joyous persons. The sight of another's anguish causes me physical anguish, and my own sensations have often usurped the sensations of a third person. A cougher constantly coughing irritates my lungs and my throat; I visit more reluctantly sick people in whom duty interests me, than those who less demand my attention, and whom I think of less. I catch the disease I study and give it to myself. I do not think it strange that it[3] brings fevers and death to those who let it have its way and who encourage it.[4]

[1] A strong imagination begets the event. — Source unknown.

[2] *Chacun en est heurté, mais aucuns en sont renversez.* In 1580–1588, the sentence read: *Chacun en est feru, mais aucuns en sont transformez.*

[3] That is, the imagination.

[4] Later, in chapter 12 of Book II, Montaigne exclaims: *Combien en a rendu malades la seule force de l'imagination!*

Simon Thomas was a great physician in his time. I remember that I met him one day at Toulouse,[1] at the house of a rich old man whose lungs were affected; and that, while discussing with him [2] means of curing him, he told him that one method was to give me reason to enjoy myself in his company, and that, fixing his eyes on the freshness of my complexion, and his mind on the cheerfulness and vigour that flowed from my youth, and filling all his senses with the blooming state in which I then was, his condition might be improved; but he forgot to say that mine might grow worse at the same time. (*a*) Gallus Vibius bent his mind so strongly to understand the essence and the actions of madness, that he dragged his judgement from its seat, so that he was never able to replace it there, and could boast of having become insane by wisdom.[3] There are some who, from terror, anticipate the hand of the executioner; and he who was unbound that his pardon might be read to him, was found stark dead on the scaffold solely from the stroke of his imagination. We sweat, we tremble, we turn pale, and we blush at the assaults of our imagination, and, sunk in a feather-bed, feel our bodies shaken by their commotion, sometimes even to death. And ebullient youth is so greatly excited [4] while sound asleep, that it satisfies in dreams its amorous desires.

> Ut quasi transactis sæpe omnibus rebus profundant
> Fluminis ingentes fluctus, vestemque cruentent.[5]

And although it may be no new thing to see horns grow in the night on one who had none when he went to bed, nevertheless the case of Cyppus, King of Italy, is noteworthy, who, after he had been present during the day, with great zest, at a bull-fight, and had dreamed all night of horns, pro-

[1] These two words were added in 1595, which fact would seem to indicate that one, or both, of the editors of 1595 had heard the story from Montaigne's lips and knew who the "rich old man" was.

[2] That is, the old man.

[3] See Seneca (Rhetor), *Controversia*, IX.

[4] *S'eschauffe si avant en son harnois.*

[5] Lucretius, IV, 1035.

duced them on his head by the force of imagination.[1] Passion gave to the son of Crœsus the voice that Nature had denied him.[2] And Antiochus was seized by a fever because of the beauty of Stratonice too vividly imprinted on his soul.[3] Pliny says that he saw Lucius Cossitius changed from a woman to a man on his wedding day.[4] Pontanus and others tell of similar metamorphoses having occurred in Italy in times past; and because of his own and his mother's vehement desire,

Vota puer solvit, quæ fœmina voverat Iphis.[5]

(*b*) Passing through Vitry le Francoys, I might have seen a man whom the Bishop of Soissons had christened Germain at his confirmation, and whom all the inhabitants of that place had seen and known as a girl, named Marie, up to the age of twenty-two. He was, when I was there, heavily bearded and old and unmarried. He says that, when making a certain effort in leaping, his virile parts appeared; and there is still current among the girls of that place a ballad in which they warn one another not to take long strides for fear of becoming boys, like Marie Germain.[6] It is not very marvellous that this sort of accident happens frequently; for, if the imagination has power in such matters, it is so continually and so strongly turned to this subject that, not to be obliged to fall back so often upon the same thought and keenness of desire, it does better to incorporate this virile part in young women once and for all.

(*a*) Some attribute the scars of King Dagobert and St. Francis to the power of imagination. It is said that by it

[1] There are tales and references, more or less full, in Valerius Maximus, Pliny, and Ovid, of or to *some* Cyppus who suddenly found himself behorned; but none of these mentions the *combat des taureaux*, or speaks of it as an effect of imagination. Montaigne seems to have taken the story from the *Diverses Leçons* of Pierre Messie (1552).

[2] This story is told by Herodotus (I, 85); but Montaigne did not read Herodotus till a later date than that at which this Essay was written, and consequently did not derive it from him.

[3] See Lucian, *On the Goddess of Syria;* Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius.*

[4] See his *Natural History*, VII, 4.

[5] As a boy Iphis paid the vows that as a girl he had made. — Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, IX, 794. The first word, in the original, is *Dona.*

[6] Montaigne tells the same story in his *Journal de Voyage.*

bodies are sometimes lifted from their places. And Celsus tells of a priest whose soul was ravished into such an ecstasy that his body remained a long time without breath and without feeling. (*c*) St. Augustine [1] mentions another, who had only to hear [2] grief-stricken and plaintive outcries when he would suddenly lose consciousness and be so completely carried out of himself that it was of no avail to storm at him, and shout, and pinch him, and scorch him, until he had come to; then he would say that he had heard voices, but as if coming from far away; and he would perceive his burns and bruises. And that it was not a secret wilful persistence in opposition to his real sensations was shown by the fact that he had meanwhile neither pulse nor breath.

(*a*) It is probable that the belief in miracles, enchantments, and such extraordinary matters, is due chiefly to the power of the imagination, acting principally on the minds of the common people, which are more easily impressed. Their credulity has been so strongly taken possession of, that they think they see what they do not see. I am also of this opinion, that these absurd marriage hindrances,[3] by which our society finds itself so embarrassed that it talks of nothing else, are easily impressions of apprehension and fear. For it is within my own knowledge that a certain man, (*b*) for whom I can answer as for myself, (*a*) on whom could fall no suspicion of weakness and as little of sorcery, having heard an acquaintance of his tell the story of an extraordinary loss of manhood, into which he had fallen at a moment when there was least occasion for it, he finding himself in a similar position, the horror of this tale suddenly struck his imagination so vividly that he incurred in consequence a similar misadventure; (*c*) and thereafter was subject to relapses, the wretched memory of his impediment taunting him and tyrannising over him. Il trouva quelque remede à cette resverie par une autre resverie. C'est qu'advouant luy mesmes et preschant avant la main cette sienne sujetion, la contantion de son ame se soulageoit sur ce, qu'aportant ce mal comme attendu, son obligation en amoindrissoit et luy en

[1] See *De Civ. Dei*, XIV, 24.

[2] *A qui il ne falloit que faire ouir.*

[3] *Ces plaisantes liaisons des mariages.*

poisoit moins. Quand il a eu loi, à son chois (sa pensée desbrouillée et desbandée, son corps se trouvant en son deu), de le faire lors premierement tenter, sesir et surprendre à la connoissance d'autruy, il s'est gueri tout net à l'endroit de ce subjet. A qui on a esté une fois capable, on n'est plus incapable, sinon par juste foiblesse.

(*a*) Ce malheur n'est à craindre qu'aux entreprinses, où nostre ame se trouve outre mesure tendue de desir et de respect, et notamment si les commoditez se rencontrent improveues et pressantes. On n'a pas moien de se ravoir de ce trouble. J'en scay, à qui il a servy d'y apporter le corps mesme, commencé à ressasier d'ailleurs, (*c*) pour endormir l'ardeur de cette fureur, et qui par l'aage se trouve moins impuissant de ce qu'il est moins puissant.[1]

I know another to whom it was of service to be assured by a friend that he was supplied with a counter-battery of enchantments certain to shield him. It is worth while for me to tell how this came about. A count, highly esteemed, with whom I was very intimate, was marrying a fair lady who had been sought in marriage by one who was present at the nuptial feast; this caused great anxiety to his friends, and especially to an old lady, his kinswoman, who presided over the festivities and gave them at her house, and who was fearful of these enchantments — as she gave me to understand. I begged her to rely on me. I had by good luck, in my boxes, a certain small flat piece of gold on which were engraved some celestial signs, as a charm against sunstroke, and as a remedy for headache by placing it just on the suture of the skull; and, to keep it in place, it was sewn to a ribbon intended to be tied under the chin; an effect of the imagination akin to that of which we are talking. Jacques Pelletier,[2] when staying at my house, had given me this odd present. I bethought myself now to make some use of it, and I told the count that he might have bad luck, like others, there being men in the company who would desire to give him

[1] This *impuissant — puissant* is a typical example of a characteristic peculiarity of Montaigne's style.

[2] Jacques Pelletier of Mans (1517–1582), whom Sainte-Beuve speaks of as *mathematicien, physicien, mêdêcin, grammairien, et avec tout cela versificateur habile.*

trouble; but that he might go boldly to bed; that I would do him a friendly turn, and in his need would not withhold a miracle which was in my power, provided that he would promise on his honour to keep it absolutely secret; but when they came in the night to bring him refreshment,[1] if things had gone ill with him, he should make me a certain signal. He had had his mind and his ears so belaboured that he found himself shackled by the disturbance of his imagination, and he gave me the signal at the appointed time. I whispered to him then to get up, on the pretext of turning us out, and to take, as if in sport, the night-robe that I wore (we were nearly of the same size), and to put it on whilst he followed my instructions: which were that, when we had gone out, he should withdraw to make water; should say certain prayers and go through certain motions thrice; that at each of the three times he should tie round his waist the ribbon which I put in his hand, and should very carefully place on his kidneys the medal that was attached to it, with the figure in a certain position; that, when this was done, and he had finally drawn the ribbon so tight that it could not be untied or moved from its place, he should return to his business, and not forget to throw my robe on his bed in such a way as to cover them both. Such idle tricks are the chief cause of the effect, the mind not being able to free itself from the idea[2] that methods so strange are due to some abstruse knowledge; their inanity gives them weight and honour. In short, my figures certainly proved more Venerian than Solar, more powerful for action than for prevention. It was a sudden and odd impulse that led me to such a proceeding, far removed from my nature. I am a foe to subtle and deceptive acts, and I hate cunning, for myself, not only in amusements, but when profitable; if the act be not vicious, the road to it is. Amasis, King of Egypt, married Laodice, a very beautiful Greek girl; and he, who showed himself a well-behaved gallant elsewhere,[3] found himself unable to enjoy her, and threatened to kill her, believing this to be some sorcery. As in things which exist only in the fancy, she urged him toward devotion; and having made his vows and

[1] *Luy porter le resveillon.* [2] *Se demesler.*
[3] *Gentil compaignon par tout ailleurs.*

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promises to Venus, he found himself divinely restored the very first night after his oblations and sacrifices.[1]

Now they [2] do wrong to greet us with such coy, disagreeable, shrinking looks, which put out our fire while kindling it. The daughter-in-law of Pythagoras [3] said that the woman who lay with a man should put aside her modesty with her clothes and put it on again with her clothes. L'ame de l'assaillant, troublée de plusieurs diverses alarmes, se perd aisement: et à qui l'imagination a faict une fois souffrir cette honte (et elle ne le fait souffrir qu'aux premieres accointances, d'autant qu'elles sont plus bouillantes et aspres, et aussi qu'en cette premiere connoissance, on craint beaucoup plus de faillir), ayant mal commencé, il entre en fievre et despit de cet accident qui luy dure aus occasions suivantes. (*c*) Les mariez, le temps estant tout leur, ne doivent ny presser, ny taster leur entreprinse, s'ils ne sont pretz; et vaut mieus faillir indecemmant à estrener la couche nuptiale, pleine d'agitation et de fievre, attendant une et une autre commodité plus privée et moins alarmée, que de tumber en une perpetuelle misere, pour s'estre etonné et desesperé du premier refus. Avant la possession prise le patient se doit, a saillies et divers temps, legierement essaier et offrir, sans se piquer et opiniastrer à se convaincre definitivement soy mesme. Ceus qui scavent leurs membres de nature docile, qu'ils se soignent seulement de contrepiper leur fantasie.

On a raison de remarquer l'indocile liberté de ce membre, s'ingerant si importunement, lors que nous n'en avons que faire, et deffaillant si importunement, lors que nous en avons le plus affaire, et contestant de l'authorité si imperieusement avec nostre volonté, refusant avec tant de fierté et d'obstination nos sollicitations et mentales et manuelles. Si toutesfois en ce qu'on gourmande sa rebellion, et qu'on en tire preuve de sa condemnation, il m'avoit payé pour plaider sa cause: à l'avanture mettrois-je en soupçon nos

[1] See Herodotus, II, 181. Montaigne gives a twist of his own to this story, to make it an illustration of the force of imagination. It was Laodice, not Amasis, who made *vœux et promesses à Venus*.

[2] That is, the women.

[3] It was Theano, his wife. See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Pythagoras*.

autres membres, ses compaignons, de luy estre allé dresser, par belle envie de l'importance et douceur de son usage, cette querelle apostée, et avoir par complot arme le monde à l'encontre de luy: le chargeant malignement seul de leur faute commune.[1] For I ask you to consider whether there is one of the parts of our body that does not often refuse to work at our will, and does not often exert itself contrary to our will. They all have passions of their own, which awaken them and put them to sleep without our permission. How often do the involuntary movements of our features testify to the thoughts that we hold secret, and betray us to those about us! The same cause that animates the male member animates also, without our choice, the heart, the lungs, and the pulse, the sight of a charming object imperceptibly diffusing within us the flame of a feverish emotion. Is it those muscles and those veins alone that rise and subside, without the consent, not only of our will, but even of our thought? We do not command our hair to stand on end and our skin to quiver with desire or with fear; the hand often goes where we do not send it; the tongue becomes tied and the voice choked at their own time; the appetite for food and drink, even when, having nothing to cook, we would gladly forbid it, does not fail to stir up those parts that are subject to it, neither more nor less than this other appetite, and it abandons us as unseasonably, whenever it pleases. The organs that serve to discharge the bowels have their own dilatations and compressions, outside of and contrary to our wishes, as those have that serve to discharge our kidneys. And although, to establish the supreme power of our will, St. Augustine declares that he had seen a man who obliged his hinder parts to break wind as often as he chose, — which fact Vivès, his commentator, caps with another case in his own day, of systematised explosions, following the measure of verses which were pronounced,[2] — this does not imply

[1] M. Pierre Villey points out that Montaigne was here inspired by a chapter of St. Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, XIV, 24), and replies to it. In M. Villey's words: *La thèse est que c'est par suite du péché original que la volonté n'est plus obéié de ce membre comme des autres.*

[2] See St. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, XIV, 24, and the commentary of Vivès thereon.

complete obedience in that organ; for is there one which is commonly more indiscreet and unruly? Moreover, I know one so turbulent and untractable that for forty years it has compelled its master to break wind at every breath,[1] and with a constant and unremitting constraint, and so brings him near to death. And would to God that I knew only by hearsay how often our belly, by a single refusal to break wind, carries us even to the gates of a very agonizing death; and would that the emperor who gave us leave to break wind everywhere, had given us the power.[2]

But our will, in behalf of whose claims we bring forward this reproach — with how much more semblance of truth can we charge her with rebellion and sedition, from her disorderliness and disobedience! Does she always desire what we would like her to desire? Does she not often desire, and to our evident injury, what we forbid her to desire? Does she allow herself to be guided by the conclusions of our judgement? Enfin, je dirois pour monsieur ma partie, que plaise a considerer qu'en ce faict, sa cause estant inseparablement conjointe a un consort, et indistinctement on ne s'adresse pourtant qu'a luy, et par des argumens et charges telles, veu la condition des parties, qu'elles ne peuvent aucunement appartenir ny concerner son dict consort. Car l'effect d'iceluy est bien de convier inopportunement par fois, mais refuser, jamais; et de convier encore tacitement et quietement.[3] Partant se voit l'animosité et l'illegalité manifeste des accusateurs. However that may be, Nature, making it clear that lawyers and judges idly wrangle and pass sentence, will meanwhile go her way, who would have done no more than right had she endowed the male member with some peculiar privilege, the author of the sole immortal work of mortals. For this reason, procreation is a divine act according to Socrates;[4] and love, desire of immortality,

[1] *Qu'il tient son maistre a peter d'une haleine.*

[2] See Suetonius, *Life of Claudius*. This last sentence does not appear in the *Édition Municipale*.

[3] This last sentence does not appear in the *Édition Municipale*.

[4] This passage is as incoherent in the original as in translation. Montaigne, it would seem, had in mind Socrates's conversation with Diotima, reported in the *Symposium*. His words recall Diotima's saying: *Viri sane mulierisque congressu fœtus partusque proverit. Est autem opus*

and itself an immortal spirit. (*a*) Perchance one man, by this effect of imagination, leaves here the king's evil that another carries back to Spain. We see, therefore, that in such matters we are wont to require an expectant mind. Why do physicians make use beforehand of the credulity of their patients by so many false promises of recovery, if not that the action of imagination may come to the aid of the imposture of their decoctions? They know that one of the masters of their profession [1] left them in writing the statement that there have been men with whom the mere sight of a medicine did its work; and I have been led to take in hand this vagary by a tale told me by an apothecary in the household of my late father, a simple-minded man, a Swiss, — a nation not unintelligent and little given to lying, — of having known for a long time a tradesman at Toulouse, a sickly man, and subject to the stone, who was often in need of injections, and had them differently prepared by physicians according to the phases of his disease. When they were brought, none of the usual forms was omitted: often he felt of them, to judge if they were too hot; and then he was to be seen on his stomach, every thing in readiness, but no injection was administered. The apothecary having withdrawn after this ceremony, the patient being arranged as if he had actually taken the injection, the same effect was produced as on those who take them. And if the physician found the operation insufficient, he would give him two or three more in the same way. My witness swears that, to save the expense (for he paid for them as if he had taken them), the sick man's wife having tried sometimes to do with only warm water, the result betrayed the imposture, and that sort being found to be useless, it was necessary to return to the first method.

A woman, thinking that she had swallowed a pin with her bread, cried out and bewailed herself as if she had an intolerable pain in her gullet where she thought she felt that it had lodged; but because there was neither swelling nor un-

hoc divinum, et in animali ipso mortali immortale hoc est conceptio scilicet et generatio. This is the Latin translation of Ficino, which Montaigne habitually used.

[1] Guillaume de Maris. See Messie, *Diverses Leçons*, II, 7.

usual appearance outside, a clever man, having concluded that it was only fancy, an idea suggested by a piece of crust that had pricked her as it went down, made her vomit, and stealthily tossed a bent pin into what she threw up. Believing that she had thrown it up, the woman immediately felt relieved of her pain. I know that a gentleman who had entertained a large company at his house bragged three or four days afterward — by way of jest, for there was no truth in it — that he had made them eat a cat in a pasty; at which a young lady of the party was so horror-struck that she fell into such great weakness of the stomach and fever, that it was impossible to save her.

The very beasts are seen to be subject, like ourselves, to the power of the imagination: witness the dogs who die of grief for the loss of their masters; we see that they, too, bark and tremble when dreaming, and that horses whinny and struggle.[1]

But all this may be attributed to the close connection between the mind and the body, interchanging their conditions. It is another matter that the imagination may sometimes act, not only against its own body, but against the body of another; and just as one body passes a disease on to its neighbour as is seen in the plague, in small-pox, and sore eyes, which are communicated from one to another,—

> Dum spectant oculi læsos, læduntur et ipsi,
> Multaque corporibus transitione nocent,[2] —

so the imagination, being violently roused, launches shafts which may hit a distant object. In ancient times it was believed that certain women in Scythia, being aroused and angered against some one, killed him with a single look.[3] Tortoises and ostriches hatch their eggs by only looking at

[1] See Lucretius, III, 493, and *passim*. Cf. Book II, chap. 12, *infra: car un cheval accustumé aux trompettes, aux harquebusades, et aux combats, que nous voyons tremousser et fremir en dormant, estendu sur sa litiere, comme s'il estoit en la meslée, il est certain qu'il conçoit en son ame un son de tambourin sans bruict, une armée sans armes et sans corps.*

[2] When eyes behold eyes in pain, they become painful themselves; and many things harm our bodies by contagion. — Ovid, *Remedium Amoris*, 615.

[3] See Pliny, *Natural History*, VII, 2.

them[1] — a proof that they possess some ejaculatory power. And as for magicians, they are said to have baleful and malignant eyes: [2] —

Nescio quis teneros oculus mihi fascinat agnos.[3]

But to my mind magicians are poor sureties. However, we know by experience that women transmit to the bodies of children in their womb the marks of their fantasies — witness her who gave birth to the Moor.[4] And there was brought to Charles, King of Bohemia and Emperor, a girl from near Pisa, all hairy and rough, whom her mother declared to have been so conceived because of an image of St. John the Baptist that hung by her bed. With animals it is the same; witness Jacob's sheep,[5] and the partridges and hares turned white by the snow on the mountains.[6] Some one saw lately at my home[7] a cat watching a bird at the top of a tree; and after they had gazed fixedly at each other for some time, the bird let itself drop as if dead into the cat's paws, either bewildered by its own imagination, or drawn by some power of attraction in the cat. Those who like hawking have heard the story of the falconer who, fixing his eyes persistently on a kite in the air, wagered that he would bring it down simply by the power of his eyes, and did it, so they say.

For the anecdotes that I borrow, I refer them to the consciences of those from whom I receive them; [8] (*b*) the inferences are my own, and are derived from the evidence of common sense, not of experience; every one can add his own examples, and let him who has none not fail to believe that

[1] *De la seule veue.* See Pliny, *Natural History*, IX, 12.

[2] See Pierre Messie, *Diverses Leçons*, II, 7.

[3] I know not whose evil eye bewitches my tender lambs. — Virgil, *Eclogues*, III, 103.

[4] This refers to an anecdote told by St. Jerome, and repeated in all the sixteenth-century dissertations on the force of the imagination, almost always accompanied by the two facts that follow it in Montaigne, the "girl from near Pisa" and "Jacob's sheep."

[5] See *Genesis*, XXX, 38 ff.

[6] See Ambroise Paré, *Des Monstres*.

[7] In 1580: *Mon père vit un jour.*

[8] The Essay ended here in the editions previous to 1588.

there are plenty of them, because of the number and variety of the chances. (*c*) If I do not rightly comment on them, let another comment for me.[1] In the study that I enter upon of our manners and acts, fabulous testimonies, provided that they are possible, serve as well as true ones. Whether it really happened or not, at Rome or at Paris, to Peter or to John, it is always an illustration of what is contained in men's minds,[2] of which I am advantageously informed by the tale. I see it and profit by it, whether it be a shadow or a solid body. And of the different forms that histories often contain, I make use of that which is most unusual and memorable. There are authors whose object it is to narrate real events. Mine, if I should be able to attain it, would be to tell of what is possible to happen. The schools are rightly permitted to imagine examples [3] when they have none. I do not do so, however, and in that respect I surpass in scrupulous conscientiousness all the fidelity of historians. In the examples which I here derive from what I have heard, done, or said, I have forbidden myself to venture to change even the most trivial and unimportant details. Consciously I do not falsify one iota; unconsciously, I can not say.

It sometimes comes into my mind about this matter, how it can be that it well befits a theologian, a philosopher, and such-like persons of delicate and accurate conscience and prudence, to write history. How can they rest their faith on a popular faith? how be responsible for the thoughts of unknown persons, and put forth their conjectures as of value? About actions with divers phases which take place in their presence, they would refuse to give evidence sworn to before a magistrate, and they know no man so intimately that they would be ready to answer fully regarding his intentions. I hold it less hazardous to write of past than of present matters, inasmuch as the writer then has only to produce a borrowed assertion. Some people urge me to write of the affairs

[1] *Si je ne comme bien, qu'un autre comme pour moy.* In the first part of this addition the *Édition Municipale* shows the various forms in which Montaigne tentatively expressed his thought before making a final decision. At this point he added, then deleted: *Ce n'est pas mal parler que mal comer.*

[2] *Un tour de l'humaine capacité.*

[3] *Similitudes.*

of my own time, judging that I view them with eyes less impaired by passion than other men, and at closer quarters, because of the access which fortune has given me to the chiefs of different parties. But they do not recognise that I would not, for the fame of Sallust, take the trouble to do this, being a sworn foe to obligation, to assiduity, to perseverance; that there is nothing so contrary to my style as a long narrative, I am stopped short so often by lack of breath; I have no skill in composition or exposition; I am more ignorant than a child of the words and phrases used for the commonest things. Therefore I have undertaken to say what I know how to say, accommodating the matter to my powers; if I should take a subject to be followed up, my measure might fall short of my topic; and were my liberty so free, I might publish opinions which, even according to my own judgement and to reason, are unlawful and punishable. Plutarch would readily acknowledge, concerning what he wrote, that it is due to others if his examples are wholly and always true; if they are profitable to posterity and presented with a brilliancy that lights our way to virtue, that is due to him. It is not of importance in an ancient tale, as it is in a medicinal drug, that it should be thus or thus.

CHAPTER XXII

ONE MAN'S PROFIT IS ANOTHER'S LOSS

The extravagant statements here made by Montaigne show that he had not accepted that "general truth" of the Stoics that "whatever is profitable to any man is profitable also to other men" (as Marcus Aurelius phrases it) — a doctrine that in its largest sense is accepted by us today. And the sayings of this dreary page would seem to come more naturally from the cold heart of a La Rochefoucauld, or the unreasonable brain of a Rousseau, than from the genial, friendly, liberal soul of Montaigne. They do in fact come from the philosophic Seneca. This unimportant little chapter is only a reproduction of a passage in the *De Beneficiis*. It may be noted that the sentence about "the ministers of religion" is Montaigne's own.

If we accept as true the statement of the last sentence that the birth of any thing causes the death of that from which it springs, it may be observed that it is precisely as true a way of stating the fact — and it sounds more cheerful! — to say that death creates life.

The quotation from Lucretius at the close is fantastically irrelevant, especially when traced to its original connection — a passage (about the colour of bodies of matter) too abstruse and abstract to give any account of here. Munro translates these lines: "For whenever a thing changes and quits its proper limits, at once this change of state is the death of that which was before."

DEMADES the Athenian condemned a man of his city, whose trade was selling the things necessary for burials, on the ground that he demanded too large a profit, and that this profit could not accrue to him without the death of many people.[1] This judgement seems to be ill-advised, because no profit is made save at a loss to some one else, and by such reckoning we should have to condemn every sort of gain. The merchant succeeds in his business only by the unthriftiness of the youth; the farmer, by the high price of grains; the architect, by the falling to pieces of houses; the officers of the law, by men's litigation and quarrels; the very honour and functions of the ministers of religion are derived from our deaths and from our vices. No physician takes pleasure in the good health even of his friends, said the old Greek comedy-writer,[2] nor any soldier in the peace of his city; and so with the rest. And, what is worse, let any man search his own heart, and he will find that our inmost desires are for the most part born and fed at another's expense. Considering which, the fancy came to me that Nature does not herein belie her general policy; for physicists hold that the birth, nourishment, and increase of every thing is the change and decay of something else.

> Nam quodcunque suis mutatum finibus exit,
> Continuo hoc mors est illius, quod fuit ante.[3]

[1] See Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, VI, 38.

[2] See Stobæus, *Sermon* 100.

[3] For if a substance changed passes beyond its confines, at that moment occurs the death of that which it was before. — Lucretius, II, 753; III, 519. Both verses appear in both places.

CHAPTER XXIII

OF CUSTOM,[1] AND THE INADVISABILITY OF CHANGING AN ESTABLISHED LAW

The examples by which, in opening this Essay, Montaigne attempts to show the power of habit are neither very interesting nor very credible. We must remember that he disclaims responsibility for the facts that he relates, and we find here an odd pell-mell of the true and the false.

We are entertained by little personalities about his "perfumed doublet" and the tower in which he lived and the bell that he heard every day. And, later, the excellent remarks on the education of children are a prelude to those that follow in a subsequent Essay, and include a delightful testimony to the effect of education on Montaigne himself. The last sentence deserves to be written in letters of gold: "In every thing and everywhere my eyes are enough to keep me straight; there are no others which watch me so closely, or which I more respect."

This is a part of a long passage inserted in 1595, which breaks in upon illustrations, not exactly of the force of habit, but of the power of training; and the essayist then passes on to examples of the odd customs of diverse nations — slipping here from one signification of the word *coûtume* — custom, habit — to another.

We may, with little loss, skip here several pages, and we then find ourselves at one of the most interesting passages we have yet come to in the Essays: "The laws of the conscience." But this passage, like many others, is made difficult and confused by being written at different periods, and the parts never properly fused together: it is three overlapping "formations." The first sentence is of 1595, the next of 1588, the next three of 1580. And the next (whole) page of 1595. It is therefore almost impossible, without long, and one may say *imaginative*, study of such passages, to follow closely Montaigne's train of thought; but even a hasty, if not a careless, reading may discover something of the largeness, the freedom, the *vitality* of his thought, and its force of subtle observation.

From these graver matters Montaigne passes to the consideration of the fantasticalness of custom in dress; but he soon swings back into matters of state, considering the question whether it is of use to change laws that have been established by long custom. The passage is of interest, not only in itself (as a discussion of political principles), but historically, as Montaigne's view of his own time and its conditions of government.

The last pages of the Essay contain Montaigne's recognition that in cases of extreme necessity the old laws should give way to new regulations; and he quotes Plutarch's praise of Philopœmen.

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[1] *La Coûtume* here stands for both personal habits and national customs.

M. Villey remarks that the many compilers of the sixteenth century took evident pleasure, as Montaigne did, in collecting examples of strange customs; and other contemporary writers, who do not give examples, insist on the force of custom. (See La Boëtie in *Le Contr'un.*) Many, like Montaigne, hold to the necessity of keeping exactly to the usages of one's native land. In the Italian authors this is especially a law of social intercourse. In others, particularly in the political writers, it is a rule of intellectual prudence and of political conversation. These two points of view are both found in this Essay.

M. Villey's résumé of the Essay presents its main outlines in a manner greatly to assist the reader:

"This Essay may be divided into two parts: (1) setting forth the power of custom and the strangeness of its effects; (2) declaring the necessity, in spite of the inanity of our usages, of following them and of avoiding all novelty. On one side, as on the other, Montaigne expresses ideas familiar to his contemporaries, and in 1580 he does so by means of examples that are frequently met with in the writings of the time. He only adds to these some facts borrowed from Plutarch's Lives, which was then his habitual reading. He is here seen to be penetrated by the feeling of relativity, and beginning to formulate his political and religious conservatism. In 1588 both parts have been considerably developed, the first by a great number of illustrations borrowed from Lopez de Gomara, the second extended by very personal developments that would seem to be inspired by the civil troubles. In 1595 both parts receive again numerous and very important additions, which prove how great Montaigne's interest continued to be in the questions he had here treated of. Herodotus, and works on the expeditions of the Portuguese to the Indies, furnished him with new customs; but especially Montaigne adds some very rich developments, many of which are directly derived from his personal experiences, while others come from abundant reading of ancient authors, as Pliny, Livy, etc., but principally from Cicero, whose conservatism singularly charmed Montaigne."

THAT man seems to me to have had a just conception of the power of habit who first invented this tale:[1] that a village woman, having been wont to fondle a calf and carry him in her arms from the moment of his birth, continuing always to do so, gained such power by habit, that she still carried him when he was a full-grown ox. For habit is truly a violent and deceitful schoolmistress. Little by little, and stealthily, she establishes within us the footing of her authority; but having, by this mild and humble beginning, stayed and rooted it with the

[1] It can be found in Stobæus, *Sermon* 29; in Quintilian, I, 9; and in the *Adages* of Erasmus, I, II, 51.

aid of time, she then displays a fierce and tyrannical countenance, in opposition to which we no longer have liberty even to lift up our eyes. We see her do violence constantly to the laws of nature. (*c*) *Usus efficacissimus rerum omnium magister.*[1] (*a*) I believe, about this, (*c*) Plato's cavern in his "Republic," [2] and I believe (*a*) the physicians who so often relinquish to her authority the logic of their art; and that king who, by her means, trained his stomach to feed on poison; [3] and the girl who, as Albert tells, was wont to feed on spiders.[4] (*b*) And in this new world of the Indies there were prosperous races, and in very different climates, who lived on them, and laid in supplies of them, and fed them; [5] and the same with grasshoppers, ants, lizards, bats; and a toad was sold for ten crowns when provisions were scarce. They cook them and dress them with different sauces. There were found there other peoples, to whom our meats and viands were poisonous and fatal. (*c*) *Consuetudinis magna vis est. Pernoctant venatores in nive; in montibus uri se patiuntur. Pugiles cæstibus contusi ne ingemiscunt quidem.*[6]

These foreign examples are not foreign to our comprehension, if we consider — a common experience — how accustomedness dulls our senses. We need not go in search of what is said about those who live near the cataracts of the Nile; [7] and what the philosophers think about celestial music, that the bodies in those spheres, being solid and polished, and slipping and rubbing against one another as they revolve, can not fail to produce harmonies by whose

[1] Custom is the most powerful master of all things. — Pliny, *Natural History*, XXVI, 2; taken by Montaigne from the *Politiques* of J. Lipsius.

[2] Book VII, at the beginning.

[3] Mithridates, King of Pontus. See Aulus Gellius, XVII, 16.

[4] *D'araignées* (spiders' webs); but the context shows that it must have been spiders. See below, *les apastoient* ("and fed them"). See Messie, *Diverses Leçons*, I, 26.

[5] This and the following particulars are found in Lopez de Gomara, *Histoire Générale des Indes*. It was written in Spanish, and a French translation by Martin Fumée was published in 1569.

[6] Great is the power of custom; huntsmen pass the night in the snow and endure the sun's heat in the mountains; boxers, when bruised by the gloves, do not even utter a groan. — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, II, 17.

[7] See Idem, *Somnium Scipionis*, VI, 19.

divisions and variations [1] the evolutions and changes in the dances of the stars are guided; but, as elsewhere in the universe, the ears of the beings of that region, benumbed, like those of the Egyptians, by the continuance of the sound, can not hear it, loud as it may be. Blacksmiths, millers, armourers, could not hold out against the noise that beats upon their ears, if they were dazed by it as we are. My perfumed doublet [2] is perceptible to my nose; but after I have worn it three successive days, it is perceived only by the noses of others. This [other fact] is even stranger — that, notwithstanding long intervals and breaks, accustomedness can span the gap and render permanent the effect of the impression on our senses, as they find who live near church-towers. I sleep at home in a tower in which every day, in the morning and evening, a very large bell rings for the Ave Maria. The racket amazes [3] my whole tower, and whereas, when I am first there, it seems intolerable to me, in a short time it becomes so familiar that I hear it without annoyance, and often without waking.

Plato reproved a child who was gambling for nuts.[4] The child answered: "You reprove me for a small matter." "Habit," Plato replied, "is not a small matter." I find that our greatest vices are contracted in our earliest childhood, and that our chief guidance lies in the hands of our nurses. It is a pastime for a mother to see a child wring a chicken's neck, and amuse himself by hurting a dog or a cat; and a father may be foolish enough to take it for a good omen of a valorous spirit when he sees his son insulting by a blow a peasant or a servant who does not defend himself; and for a pretty wit when he sees him cheat his comrade by some crafty falsehood and fraud. These are, however, the true seeds and roots of cruelty and of tyranny and of treachery. They sprout there, and afterward grow lustily and greatly thrive at the hands of custom. And it is a very dangerous education to excuse such base tendencies by the feebleness of childhood and the trivial nature of the subject. Firstly, it is Nature who speaks, whose voice is purer and more pierc-

[1] *Coupures et muances.* [2] *Collet de fleurs.* [3] *Effraye.*

[4] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Plato.* Laertius says that he reproved a man who was gambling with dice.

ing, as it is shriller.[1] Secondly, the ugliness of deceit does not consist in the difference between crowns and pins: it exists in itself. I find it much truer to argue thus: "Why would he not cheat about crowns, since he cheats about pins?" than, as they do: "It is only about pins; he would be careful not to do so about crowns." We must sedulously teach children to hate vices for their own texture, and must teach them their natural monstrosity, so that they may shun them, not in their actions only, but, above all, in their hearts; that the mere thought of them may be hateful, whatever mask they wear. I know well that, from having been taught[2] in boyhood to follow always my broad, straight road, and from having always had a repugnance to mingle trickery or cunning in my childish games (indeed, it should be noted that the games of children are not games, and must be judged as their most serious acts), there is no pastime so trivial that I do not bring to it inwardly, and by a natural and unstudied propensity, an extreme aversion to deceit. I play cards for doubles,[3] and keep count as carefully as if they were double doubloons, when gaining or losing against my wife and daughter is a matter of indifference to me, as when I am playing in earnest. In every thing and everywhere my eyes are enough to keep me straight; there are no others which watch me so closely or which I more respect.

(*a*) I have just seen at my house a little man, a native of Nantes,[4] who was born without arms and who has so well trained his feet for the service which hands ought to perform, that they have in truth half forgotten their natural office. Furthermore, he calls them his hands; he carves, loads a pistol and fires it, threads his needle, sews, writes, takes off his cap, combs his hair, plays at cards and with dice, and handles them as dexterously as anybody else could do. The money that I gave him (for he earned his living by exhibiting himself)[5] he carried away in his foot as we

[1] *Plus pure et plus forte qu'elle est plus gresle.* Changed in 1595 to: *plus pure et plus naifve, qu'elle est plus gresle et plus neuve.*

[2] *Pour m'estre duit.*

[3] A small copper coin worth one sixth of a sou.

[4] This person is mentioned in many journals of this time.

[5] The clause in parentheses is omitted in the edition of 1595.

do in our hand. I saw another who lost his arms when a child,[1] who wielded a two-handed sword and a halberd in the bend of the neck, for lack of hands, threw them in the air and caught them, cast a dagger, and cracked a whip as well as any carter in France.

But we discern her effects[2] much better in the strange impressions she makes on our minds, where she does not find so much resistance. What is impossible to her regarding our judgements and our beliefs? Is there any opinion so fantastical (I leave out of account the gross imposture of religious belief wherewith so many great nations and so many able personages are seen to be bewildered; for that matter being outside of our human reasonings, it is more excusable for him who is not extraordinarily enlightened by divine favour to lose himself therein) — but of other opinions are there any so strange which she has not planted and established by law in the countries where it has seemed to her well to do so? (*c*) And that ancient exclamation is very true: *Non pudet physicum, id est speculatorem venatoremque naturæ, ab animis consuetudine imbutis quærere testimonium veritatis.*[3] (*b*) I believe that no fancy, however extravagant, ever comes into the human imagination, which does not find example in some public custom, and which consequently our reason does not prop up and support. There are peoples who turn the back on the person saluted, and never look at one to whom they desire to do honour.[4] There are other nations where, when the king spits, the greatest favourite among the women of his court holds out her hand; and in still another the most eminent of those about his person stoop to take up his dirt in a cloth.

(*c*) Let me find room here for an anecdote. A certain French gentleman always blew his nose with his hand (a

[1] *J'en vy un autre, estant enfant.* A similar case is mentioned by Ambroise Paré, in *Des Monstres*.

[2] That is, those of custom.

[3] Is not the natural philosopher, that is, the explorer and the hunter of nature, ashamed to seek evidence of the truth from minds prejudiced by custom! — Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.*, I, 30.

[4] This example, and all of those following which were added in 1588 (*b*), down to line 5 on page 151 *infra*, are taken, sometimes with slight variations, from Gomara's *Histoire Génêrale des Indes*.

thing altogether contrary to our custom). Defending this action of his, — and he was famous for keen sayings, — he asked me what distinction that dirty excrement had, that we should provide a fine piece of delicate linen to receive it in, and then, what is more, fold it up and carry it about with us; that that would seem naturally to cause us more disgust and sicken us more than to see it dropped here or there, as we do our other excrements. I found what he said not at all unreasonable; and that habit had prevented my marking this strange act, which, however, we find so odious when it is told of another country. Miracles exist from our ignorance of nature, not in nature herself. Habituation closes the eyes of our judgement. Barbarians are in no wise more astonishing to us than we are to them, nor with more reason, as every one would admit if every one, after having gone through these unfamiliar examples, would consider his own,[1] and compare them judiciously. Our human reason is a dye, infinite in quality, infinite in variety, infused in almost equal degree in all our opinions and manners, of whatever form they may be.

I resume. There are nations (*b*) where no one save his wife and children speaks to the king except through a speaking-trumpet. In another, the maidens go with their private parts uncovered, while the married women carefully cover and conceal theirs; to which this other custom, found elsewhere, bears some relation: chastity is valued only for the behoof of the marriage tie, for unmarried women can abandon themselves at their pleasure, and, being with child, can cause themselves to abort by taking the proper drugs, in every one's sight. And elsewhere, if it be a merchant who marries, all the merchants invited to the wedding lie with the bride before he does, and the more of them there are, the more she acquires of honour, and of reputation for endurance and capacity. If a man holding public office marries, the same rule applies; so, if it be a noble; and the same with others, unless it be a labouring man or any one of the common people; for in that case it is the lord's prerogative; and yet, in that country, they do not fail to enjoin strict fidelity during wedlock. There are other [peoples] where there

[1] *Se coucher sur les propres.*

are public brothels for males, and, actually, marriages; where the women go to war along with their husbands, and have their place, not in battle only, but also in command; where not only are rings worn in the nose, the lips, the cheeks, and the big toe, but rods of gold, very heavy, are thrust through the breasts and the buttocks; where, while eating, they wipe their fingers on their thighs, their private parts, and the soles of their feet; where children do not inherit, but brothers and nephews, and elsewhere nephews alone, except in succession to the prince; where, in order to regulate the community of goods which is customary there, certain magistrates with sovereign power have entire charge of the cultivation of the land and of the distribution of crops according to each one's need; where they weep over the deaths of children and make rejoicing over those of old men; where they lie ten or twelve in a bed with their wives; where women who lose their husbands by a violent death may remarry, but not others; where they think so ill of the condition of women that they kill all the female children who are born there, and buy from their neighbours women for breeding; where husbands can repudiate [their wives] without cause, but not wives [their husbands] for any cause whatsoever; where husbands can lawfully sell their wives if they be sterile; where they have the body of the dead boiled and then pounded until it is like a broth, which they mix with their wine, and drink; where the most desirable sepulture is to be eaten by dogs, elsewhere by birds; [1] where they believe that the souls of the blessed live in perfect freedom, in delightful fields, supplied with all pleasures, and that it is they who make the echo we hear; where they fight in water, and discharge their arrows with sure aim while swimming; where, in token of submission, a man must raise his shoulders and hang his head, and remove his shoes when he enters the king's palace; where the eunuchs who have the nuns in their charge lack nose and lips as well, so that they cannot be loved, and the priests put out their own eyes in order to become acquainted with the demons and to receive oracles; where every one makes a god of whatever he

[1] Gomara does not mention being eaten by birds; but see Plutarch, *That vice alone is enough to make a man miserable.*

chooses, — the hunter, of a lion or fox, the fisherman, of certain fish, — and idols of every human action or passion: the sun, the moon, and the earth are the chief gods; the manner of making oath is to touch the ground while looking at the sun; and they eat flesh and fish raw. (*c*) Where the most binding oath is to swear by the name of some dead man who bore a good reputation in the country, placing the hand on his tomb; [1] where the annual gift that the king sends to the princes his vassals is fire; when the ambassador who brings it arrives, the old fire is everywhere put out in the house, and all the people are required to come and supply themselves from this new fire, or be adjudged guilty of lèse-majesté; [2] where, when the king, in order to give himself entirely to religion, as they often do, abdicates his sovereignty, his next successor is obliged to do likewise, and the right of kingship passes to the third in succession; where they vary the form of government as circumstances require: they depose the king when it seems well, and substitute for him elders of the state, to take the helm, and sometimes, too, leave it in the hands of the commonalty; where men and women are circumcised, and likewise baptised; where the soldier who, in one or several battles, has succeeded in presenting to his king the heads of seven foes is ennobled.[3] (*b*) Where men live under the unusual, uncivilised doctrine of the mortality of the soul; where the women lie in without complaint and without fear. (*c*) Where the women wear copper rings on both legs, and, if a louse bites them, are bound by the duty of courage, to bite back, and dare not marry until they have offered their virginity to the king if he desires it.[4] (*b*) Where men salute each other by putting the

[1] See Herodotus, IV, 172. At this point Montaigne wrote on the Bordeaux copy of 1588: *Ou le peuple adore certeins Dieus*[,] *Mars*[,] *Bacchus*[,] *Diane*[;] *Le Roy un dieu particulier pour soi*[,] *Mercure*, which he afterwards struck out, and inserted in chapter 42 of this Book: see *infra*, page 343.

[2] See Goulard, *Histoire du Portugal*, for this and most of the following examples.

[3] See Lopez de Castaneda, *Histoire de la decouverte et de la conquête des Indes par les Portugais* (book XIV), from which Goulard derived most of his material.

[4] See Herodotus, IV, 168.

finger to the ground, then raising it toward heaven; where the men carry burdens on their heads, the women on their shoulders:[1] the latter make water standing, the men stooping; where they send some of their blood as a symbol of friendship, and burn incense, as to the gods, to the men whom they wish to honour; where kinship not only in the fourth, but in even more distant degrees, is a bar to marriage; where children are kept four years at nurse, and often twelve, and there too it is considered fatal to give a child the breast during the first day; where fathers have the duty of punishing the male children, and mothers, exclusively, the females; and the punishment is to smoke them while they are hung up by the feet; where the women are circumcised; where they eat all sorts of herbs, without other discrimination than that of refusing those which seem to them to have a bad odour; where every thing is open, and the houses, however beautiful and sumptuous they may be, have neither door nor window nor chest that can be locked, and thieves are punished twice as severely as elsewhere; where they kill lice with their teeth, as monkeys do, and think it horrible to see them crushed by the nails; where they never cut either the hair or the nails during life; other places where they cut the nails of the right hand only, those of the left hand being kept long for prettiness. (*c*) Where they let all the hair on the right side of the body grow as long as it can, and shave the left side clean;[2] and in neighbouring provinces, in one they let the hair grow in front, in the other, behind, and shave the front.[3] (*b*) Where fathers lend their children, husbands their wives, to be enjoyed by their guests, for pay; where a man can lawfully have children by his mother, and where fathers forgather with their daughters, and mothers with their sons; (*c*) where, on festal occasions, they lend[4] their children one to another. (*a*) In one country human flesh is eaten; in another it is a pious duty to kill your father at a certain age; elsewhere, fathers decree, as to their

[1] See Herodotus, II, 35.
[2] See Idem, IV, 191.
[3] See Idem, IV, 180.
[4] The edition of 1595 adds here: *sans distinction de parenté.* We return now for a moment to the text of 1580.

still unborn children, which one they wish brought up and preserved, and which they wish to be cast out and killed; elsewhere, aged husbands lend their wives to young men to be used, and elsewhere they are blamelessly common;[1] indeed, in one land they wear as a badge of honour as many rows of fringe on the edge of their garments as they have known men.[2] And has not custom even caused a separate state of women[3] to exist? has she not put arms in their hands, and caused them to train armies and fight battles? And that which reason and all philosophy can not implant in the heads of the wisest men, does not she teach, solely by her decree, to the dullest of the common people? For we know whole regions where death was not only scorned, but welcomed with rejoicing;[4] where children of seven endured to be whipped to death without changing countenance; where riches were held in such scorn that the meanest citizen in the town would not have deigned to stoop to pick up a purse full of gold. And we know places very fruitful in all sorts of provisions where, none the less, the most usual and most delicate dishes were bread, cresses, and water.[5]

(*b*) Did not custom work even that miracle in Cio, that seven hundred years passed during which there was no remembrance that either maid or wife there had been false to her honour?[6] (*a*) In fine, to my thinking, there is nothing which she does not do or could not do; and Pindar justly calls her, as I have been told, the Queen and Empress of the world.[7]

(*c*) The man who was found beating his father declared that it was the custom of his family: that his father had thus beaten his grandfather, and his grandfather his great-grandfather; and, pointing to his son, he said: "He will beat me when he has reached my present age." And that father whose son haled him and tugged him through the

[1] See Herodotus, IV, 172. [2] See Idem, IV, 176.

[3] An allusion to the republic of the Amazons.

[4] Especially the Thracians. See Valerius Maximus, II, 6, *ext.* 12. The text of 1580–1588 is here slightly shortened, but without change of meaning.

[5] See Xenophon, *Cyropædeia*, I, 2.

[6] See Plutarch, *Of the virtuous deeds of women.*

[7] See Herodotus, III, 38.

street bade him stop at a certain door, for he himself had dragged his father only so far; that that was the limit of the hereditary humiliating treatment which, in their family, the children were accustomed to inflict on their fathers. From custom, says Aristotle,[1] as often as from sickness, women tear their hair, gnaw their nails, eat coals and earth; and more from custom than from nature, males cohabit with males. The laws of conscience, which we say are engendered by nature, are born of custom; every man, holding in inward veneration the opinions and fashions approved and received around him, can not depart from them without [self] upbraiding, or conform to them without [self] commendation.[2]

(*b*) When the Cretans, in old days, wished to curse some one, they besought the gods to involve him in some evil custom.[3] (*a*) But the principal effect of her authority is to seize and grip us in such wise that it is scarcely in our power to throw off her clutch, and to return into ourselves to reflect and reason about her decrees. In truth, because we suck these in with the milk of our birth, and because the face of the world presents itself in this guise to our earliest vision, we seem born necessarily to follow this course. And the common ideas that we find in credit around us, and infused in our minds by the seed of our fathers, seem to be universal and natural ideas. (*c*) Whence it happens that whatever is unhinged from custom, we believe to be unhinged from reason,[4] God knows how unreasonably in most instances. If, as we who study ourselves have learned to do, every one who hears a wise thought should consider instantly how it applies to his own case, he would find that it was not so much an excellent saying as an excellent blow at the usual stupidity of his judgement. But we receive the warnings of truth and its precepts as addressed to the common people, never to ourselves; and every one, instead of applying them

[1] See Aristotle, *Nicomachæan Ethics*, VII, 5.

[2] *Ne s'en peut desprendre sans remors, ny s'y appliquer sans applaudissement.*

[3] See Valerius Maximus, VII, 2, *ext.* 18.

[4] *Ce qui est hors des gonds de coutume, on le croit hors des gonds de raison.*

to his morals, impresses them on his memory, very foolishly and very uselessly.

Let us return to the authority of custom. Peoples brought up in liberty, and to rule themselves, consider every other form of government monstrous and contrary to nature. Those who are accustomed to monarchy think after the same fashion; and whatever facility for change fortune affords them, even when they have with great difficulty rid themselves of the burden of a master, they hasten to install a new one with the like difficulty, because they can not resolve to regard with detestation the being lorded over. It is through the intervention of custom that every one is content with the place where nature has planted him; and the savages of Scotland have no use for Touraine, nor the Scythians for Thessaly.[1]

(*a*) Darius asked certain Greeks what would induce them to adopt the Indian custom of eating their deceased fathers (for that was their habit, deeming that they could give them no more propitious sepulture than within themselves); they replied that not for any thing in the world would they do it; but [Darius] having also tried to persuade the Indians to lay aside their custom and adopt that of the Greeks, which was to burn their fathers' bodies, he horrified them even more.[2] Each one of us acts in the same way, inasmuch as habit conceals from us the true aspect of things.

> Nil adeo magnum, nec tam mirabile quicquam
> Principio, quod non minuant mirarier omnes
> Paulatim.[3]

Having occasion once to show the value of some one of our regulations, accepted with settled authority on all sides of us; not desiring, as is commonly done, to establish it solely

[1] This last sentence is not found in the *Édition Municipale*, but was added in 1595.

[2] See Herodotus, III, 38.

[3] There is nothing so great or so admirable at first, that we do not gradually admire it less. — Lucretius, II, 1028. In modern texts the last two lines are: —

> Quod non paulatim minuant mirarier omnes.
> Principio —

by the powers of law and example, but harking back to its origin, I found its basis so weak [1] that I was almost out of conceit with it — I who had to assert it to another.

(*c*) It is by this remedy (which he considers the chief and most potent one) that Plato undertakes to expel the unnatural [and preposterous [2]] passions of his age: namely, that public opinion condemns them; that the poets, that every one speaks ill of them — a remedy by whose operation the fairest daughters no longer arouse the love of their fathers, nor the brothers who most excel in beauty the love of their sisters; the very legends of Thyestes, of Œdipus, and of Macareus having, with the charm of their music, instilled this profitable belief [3] in the tender brains of children.[4] In truth, chastity is an excellent virtue, whose utility is very well known; but to treat of it and show its value by natural conditions is as difficult as it is easy to show its value in custom, laws, and precepts. The fundamental and universal reasons for it are difficult of investigation, and our masters skim lightly over them, or, not daring even to touch them, throw themselves from the first into the sanctuary of custom, where they can strut and triumph easily. Those who do not choose to let themselves be carried away from the original source err even more, and are subjected to uncivilised opinions: witness Chrysippus, who scattered about in so many places in his writings the small importance he attributed to incestuous unions, of whatever nature they might be.[5] (*a*) Whoever would make a similar attempt and rid himself of this violent pre-judgement of custom, will find several things to be accepted with unquestioning resolution, which have no support save in the gray beard and wrinkles of the wontedness that is associated with them. But when that mask is torn away, these things being brought into relation with truth and right, he will feel that his judgement has been turned topsy-turvy, but is consequently reëstablished much more surely. For example, I will ask them what can

[1] In 1580–1588: *si chetif et si foible.*
[2] These two words added in 1595.
[3] Of their condemnation.
[4] See Plato, *Laws* (Jowett, Amer. Ed., V, 217–221).
[5] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Chrysippus.*

be stranger than to see a people obliged to follow laws that it never understands; bound in all its domestic affairs — marriages, donations, testaments, sales, and purchases — by rules of which it can not have knowledge, as they are neither written nor proclaimed in its own language, and of which it must necessarily purchase the interpretation and the practice. (*c*) Not according to the ingenious conception of Isocrates, who advised his king to make the traffic and negotiations of his subjects free, unrestrained, and lucrative, and their disputes and quarrels burdensome, loading them with heavy penalties,[1] but according to a monstrous conception that the right itself should be made a matter of traffic, and the laws treated as merchandise. (*a*) I am grateful to fortune that, so our historians say, it was a Gascon gentleman, a countryman of mine, who first opposed Charlemagne when he desired to give us the laws of Rome and the Empire.[2] What is more barbarous than to see a nation where, by a legalised custom, the office of judge is sold, and judgements are bought for ready money, and where justice is legally denied to him who has not the means to pay for it; and where this traffic is in such great repute that there exists in a government a fourth estate of persons dealing in lawsuits, alongside the three ancient estates of the church, the nobility, and the common people; which fourth estate, having the administration of the laws and sovereign authority over property and lives, forms a body apart from that of the nobility. Whence it happens that there are two sorts of laws, in many respects very different — those of honour and those of justice: thus, the former condemn as strictly the lie tamely submitted to, as the latter do the lies revenged; by the decree of arms he is stripped of honour and nobility who submits to an insult, and by civil decree he who takes vengeance for it incurs a disgraceful punishment; he who appeals to the laws to obtain satisfaction for an offence to his honour, dishonours himself, and he who does not so appeal is punished and chastised by the laws. And of these two bodies,[3] so unlike yet connected under one head,[4] those rep-

[1] See Isocrates, *Oratio ad Nicoclem*, VI, 18.
[2] *Les loix Latines et Imperiales*. See Paulus Jovius.
[3] That is, the lawyers and the nobility. [4] The king.

resent peace, these war; those profit, these honour; those learning, these merit; those speech, these action; those justice, these valour; those reason, these force; those have the robe, these the sword for their portion.[1]

As for unimportant things, such as clothes, to whoever may desire to connect them with their true purpose, which is the service and pleasure of the body, upon which their charm and essential seemliness depend — I will suggest to him as, among others, the most fantastic that can be imagined, our square caps, that long tail of folded velvet, with its vari-coloured trimming, which hangs from the heads of our women, and that idle and useless covering of a member which we cannot decently even name, of which none the less we make show and parade in public. These considerations do not, however, turn a man of understanding aside from following the common custom. But, on the other hand, it seems to me that all unusual and peculiar fashions proceed rather from foolishness or ambitious affectation than from right reason; and that the wise man should inwardly withdraw his mind from the crowd and give it liberty and power to judge freely of things; but outwardly he should altogether follow the accepted fashions and forms. Society at large has no concern with our thoughts; but all the rest, as our acts, our work, our fortunes, and our lives, we must lend and abandon to its service and to public opinion: as the great and good Socrates refused to save his life by disobeying the magistrate, and verily a most unjust and most iniquitous magistrate.[2] For it is the rule of rules and the universal law of laws, that every one must obey those of the place where he is: —

Νόμοις ἕπεσθαι τοῖσιν ἔγχωροις καλόν.[3]

Here is a consideration of another sort.[4] There is great doubt if there can be found as manifest advantage in alter-

[1] *Ceux-là la robbe longue, ceux-cy la courte en partage.*

[2] See Plato, *Crito;* Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Socrates.*

[3] It is noble to obey the laws of the country in which one dwells. — M. Villey thinks that Montaigne found this in a collection of Greek sentences compiled by Crispin (1569).

[4] *En voicy d'un autre cuvée.*

ing an accepted law, whatever it may be, as there is harm in disturbing it; inasmuch as a system of government is like a structure of many parts so closely bound together that it is impossible to move one of them without the whole building feeling it. The law-maker of the Thurians[1] decreed that whoever should desire either to repeal an old law, or to introduce a new one, should present himself before the people with a rope about his neck, so that, if the innovation were not approved by every one, he might be instantly hanged. And he of Lacedæmon[2] spent his life in obtaining from his fellow citizens a firm promise not to violate any of his decrees. The ephor who so harshly cut the two strings that Phrynis had added to his lyre was not concerned as to whether it was bettered by them, or whether the chords were the richer; it was enough for their condemnation that they were a change from the old mode.[3] The same was signified by the rusted sword of justice at Marseilles.[4]

(*b*) I am disgusted with novelty, whatever aspect it bears; and rightly so, for I have seen most harmful consequences of it. That which has been harrying us for so many years [5] has not seized upon every thing; but we can say with plausibility that incidentally it has produced and given birth to every thing, verily, even to the ills and destruction which in the meantime have taken place without it and in opposition to it; there is good reason for it to blame itself therefor.[6]

Heu! patior telis vulnera facta meis.[7]

They who first shake a state are easily the first to be involved in its ruin. (*c*) The profit of the disturbance seldom falls to the lot of him who has stirred it up: he lashes and muddies the water for other fishers. (*b*) The joints and

[1] Zaleucus, the legislator of the *Locrians*. See Diodorus Siculus, XII, 4; Plato, *Phædo*.

[2] Lycurgus. See Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*.

[3] See Idem, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians*.

[4] See Valerius Maximus, II, 6, *ext.* 7.

[5] In 1588: *depuis vingt-cinq ou trente ans*.

[6] *C'est à elle à s'en prendre au nez*.

[7] Alas! I suffer from wounds made by my own weapons. — Ovid, *Heroïdes*, II, 48 (Epistle of Phyllis to Demophoön).

framework of this monarchy, this great edifice, notably in its old age, having been displaced and loosened by novelty, afford all the opening and entrance you please to such outrages. (*c*) The royal majesty is cast down with much more difficulty, says an ancient writer, from the summit to the halfway point, than hurled from that point into the depths. But if the inventors are the more harmful, the imitators are the more vicious in recklessly following examples of which they have perceived and punished the detestableness and the evil; and if there are degrees of honour, even in doing evil, the latter should accord to the others the glory of the invention and the courage of the first attempt.

(*b*) All sorts of new disorders draw, by good luck, from this first and prolific source, devices and models for disturbing our government. We read in our very laws, designed to remedy this original evil, the training and excuse for all sorts of evil undertakings; and there happens to us what Thucydides says of the civil wars of his time — that, favouring the public vices, they created new and gentler words in their excuse, falsifying and softening their true names.[1] And this, howsoever, is to reform our consciences and our beliefs! *Honesta oratio est.*[2] But the best pretext for innovation is very hazardous. (*c*) *Adeo nihil motum ex antiquo probabile est.*[3] (*b*) And it seems to me, to speak frankly, that there is great self-love and presumption in setting so high a value on one's opinions that, to establish them, it is necessary to upset public tranquillity and to introduce so many inevitable evils and such shocking corruption of morals as civil wars bring about, and the mutations in the state in a matter of such weight — and to introduce them into one's own country. (*c*) Is it not bad management to bring to the front so many certain and known vices, to combat errors denied and debatable? Is there any worse sort of vice than those which offend one's own conscience and instinctive knowledge? The [Roman] Senate, in the dispute between it and the people as

[1] See Thucydides, III, 52. Montaigne probably took it from Plutarch, *How to distinguish a flatterer from a friend.*

[2] The pretext is honourable. — Terence, *Andria*, I, 1.114.

[3] Indeed, no change from ancient customs is worthy of approval. — Livy, XXXIV, 54.

to the administration of their religion, ventured to give as satisfaction this excuse: *Ad deos id magis quam ad se pertinere; ipsos visuros ne sacra sua polluantur*,[1] conformably to what the oracle replied to those of Delphi in the war against the Medes. Fearing the invasion of the Persians, they asked the god what they were to do with the sacred treasures of his temple — whether they should conceal them, or carry them away. He replied that they should move nothing; that they should care for themselves; that he was able to provide for what was his.[2]

(*b*) The Christian religion has all the marks of the greatest rightness and usefulness; but none more evident than the explicit injunction of obedience to authority, and upholding of the forms of government. What a marvellous example of this, divine wisdom has given us, which, to ensure the salvation of the human race, and to conduct its glorious victory over death and sin, chose to do this only under sufferance of our political system, and subjected its progress and the guidance toward so high and so salutary a result to the blindness and injustice of our observances and usages, allowing the innocent blood to flow of so many of the elect, its beloved, and permitting the loss of long years in the ripening of this inestimable fruit! There is a vast difference between his cause who follows the customs and laws of his country, and that of him who undertakes to govern them and change them. The first may plead in excuse single-mindedness, obedience, and precedent; whatever he may do, it cannot be from ill intent; at the worst, it is disastrous. (*c*) *Quis est enim quem non moveat clarissimis monumentis testata consignataque antiquitas?* [3] Besides what Isocrates says, that falling short is more akin to moderation than excess is.[4]

(*b*) The other is in a much worse posture; (*c*) for he who meddles with choosing and changing usurps the authority of

[1] This matter concerned the gods more than it did them; the gods themselves would see to it that their sacred rites were not profaned. — Livy, X, 6.

[2] See Herodotus, VIII, 36.

[3] For who is not moved by antiquity, witnessed and attested by the most glorious monuments? — Cicero, *De Divin.*, I, 40.

[4] See Isocrates, *Oratio ad Nicoclem.*

judging, and should be quite sure that he sees the error of what he rejects and the benefit of what he introduces. This commonplace consideration settled me in my seat, and kept even my more heedless youth in check from burdening my shoulders with so heavy a load as to make myself a surety for knowledge of such importance, and from venturing, in this matter, what in sound discretion I could not venture to do in the simplest of those matters in which I had been instructed, and in which rashness of judgement does no harm. For it seemed to me very wrong to seek to subject public and fixed constitutions and usages to the instability of a private opinion (private judgement has only a private jurisdiction), and to undertake with respect to divine laws what no government would suffer with respect to human laws, which, although human reason has much more connection with them, yet are they sovereign judges of their judges, and the greatest ability serves but to explain and extend the accepted use of them, not to divert it and innovate upon it. If sometimes divine providence has overridden the rules to which it has necessarily subjected us, it is not for us to dispense with them: those are strokes of the divine hand which we must not imitate, but admire; and extraordinary cases, marked with a designed and special warranting of the sort of miracles which it offers us as evidence of its omnipotence, far above our methods and our powers, and which it is folly and impiety to try to reproduce — paths, not for our feet, but for us to contemplate with amazement; acts belonging to the part it plays, not to us.[1] Cotta protests very fitly: *Quum de religione agitur, T. Coruncanium, P. Scipionem, P. Scævolam, pontifices maximos, non Zenonem aut Cleanthem aut Chrysippum sequor.*[2]

[1] *Et que nous ne devons pas suivre, mais contempler avec estonnement; actes de son personnage, non pas du nostre.*

[2] In religious matters I follow T. Coruncanius, P. Scipio, and P. Scævola, high pontiffs, and not Zeno or Cleanthes, or Chrysippus. — Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.*, III, 2. This addition of the *Édition Municipale*, beginning in the last line but one of p. 161, appears in only a few copies of 1595; in some copies it was inserted by Mademoiselle de Gournay by a *carton*. It first appeared properly in the edition of 1602.

(*b*) God knows, in our present quarrel, in which there are a hundred points of dispute to be taken out and put back, — points of great and profound importance, — how many persons there are who can boast of having accurately grasped the arguments of one and the other party. It is a number, if a number there be, which would have no great power to disturb us. But all this other crowd — whither is it going? under what standard does it turn out of the road? [1] It happens with theirs as with other weak and ill-employed drugs: the humours of which it sought to purge us, it has heated and irritated and embittered by the conflict, and still it has remained in our body. It has failed to purge us because of its weakness, and yet it has weakened us so that we can no longer void it, and we get from its operation only intestinal pains long-continued. (*a*)[2] Yet, however, fortune, retaining always its authority over our judgements, sometimes presents us with so urgent a necessity that there is need for the laws to give way to it somewhat. (*b*) And when we resist the growth of an innovation which has been introduced by violence, to hold ourselves in every thing and everywhere in check and bound by rule, while our opponents have full liberty,[3] to whom every thing is permissible that can advance their purpose, — who have no other law or rule to follow than their own advantage, — imposes a hazardous obligation and disparity. (*c*) *Aditum nocendi perfido præstat fides.*[4] (*b*) For the ordinary polity of a state in good health does not provide for such extraordinary accidents; it presupposes a body which is composed of its principal members and offices, and a common consent to respect and obey it. (*c*) Lawful procedure is a cold, heavy, and constrained procedure, and is not fitted to make head against a lawless and unbridled procedure.

(*a*) We know that it is still matter of reproach to those

[1] *Soubs quelle enseigne se jette elle à quartier?*

[2] In the editions prior to 1588, this immediately followed "the rusted sword of justice at Marseilles," page 159 *supra*.

[3] *Contre ceux qui ont la clef des champs.*

[4] He who puts faith in a treacherous man gives entrance to harm. — Seneca, *Œdipus*, III, 686.

two great men, Octavius [1] and Cato, in the civil wars, — the first with Sylla, the other with Cæsar, — that they allowed their country to incur the utmost extremities rather than succour it at the expense of its laws and by changing any thing. For, in truth, in those extreme emergencies, where to hold one's ground is the most to be looked for, it would be perchance more wisely done to bow the head and give way a little to the blow, rather than, persisting beyond possibility in yielding nothing, to give violence opportunity to trample every thing underfoot; and it would be better to make the laws desire to do what they can, since they can not do what they desire. Thus did he who ordered that they [the laws] should sleep four-and-twenty hours; [2] and he who for that occasion took a day out of the calendar; and that other who of the month of June made a second May.[3] Even the Lacedæmonians, who observed so religiously the laws of their country, being hampered by that one which prohibited the election of the same person twice as admiral, and, on the other hand, their affairs rendering it absolutely necessary that Lysander should again assume that office — they made, indeed, one Aracus admiral, but Lysander superintendent of the navy.[4] And with the same sort of subtlety, one of their ambassadors being sent to the Athenians to secure a change in some decree,[5] and Pericles declaring to him that it was forbidden to take away the tablet on which a law had once been set down, he [the ambassador] advised him merely to turn it over, inasmuch as that was not forbidden. It is for this that Plutarch praises Philopœmen — that, being born to command, he knew, not only how to command according to the laws, but how to command the laws themselves when public necessity required it.[6]

[1] This was not Octavius, afterward Augustus, but Octavius who was consul with Cinna, and of whom Plutarch speaks at some length in the *Life of Marius*.

[2] Agesilaus. See Idem, *Life of Agesilaus*.

[3] Alexander the Great. See Idem, *Life of Alexander*.

[4] See Idem, *Life of Lysander*.

[5] Really, to stay the breaking out of the Peloponnesian War. The ambassador was Polyarces. See Idem, *Life of Pericles*.

[6] See Idem, *Parallel between Flaminius and Philopœmen*.

CHAPTER XXIV

DIFFERENT RESULTS OF THE SAME COUNSEL

It is pleasant to think of Montaigne and Jacques Amyot (1503–1593), "evêque d'Auxerre," talking together; pleasant, not because Amyot was "grand aumosnier de France," but because he was the famous translator of Plutarch, the writer of whom Montaigne says in a later Essay ("Business To-morrow"), "I give . . . the palm to Jacques Amyot over all our French authors, not only for simplicity and purity of language wherein he surpasses all others," and for this and for that; "but especially I am grateful to him for having culled out and chosen a book so worthy and so opportune, to make a present of it to his country. We ignoramuses had been lost if this book had not lifted us out of the mire." We see that in the whole course of the Essays Montaigne felt himself indebted to Amyot.

So Jacques Amyot was talking to him (one would like to know when and where) about "one of our princes." This particular prince of Amyot's story was François, duc de Guise, surnamed *le Balafré*, who was assassinated in 1563, and whose death we have already heard of in the second Essay. Here we learn how, the year before, he escaped assassination (by a Protestant) by "sermonising" his would-be murderer. This story is followed by a long translation from Seneca of the similar story of Augustus, which Corneille has celebrated in his *Cinna*. These two stories are intended to "point the moral," that the *rightest* path is the *safest:* "The safest way . . . is, in my opinion, to throw oneself on the side in which there is the most uprightness" and justice. A characteristic conclusion for Montaigne to reach.

But in reaching this conclusion, Montaigne has taken a most wandering course, and has discussed the share that fortune has in the success of medicine, of poetry and painting, and of military enterprises; so large a share that he believes (as his title says): in "different results of the same counsel." The passage about medicine is amusing; it is the first of his repeated Molière-like outbursts against the medical profession.

The title does not fit closely to the rest of the Essay, the greater part of which was added in 1588, and which is occupied with the uselessness of attempting to prevent conspiracies by punishments, and with the torment a ruler must suffer who is suspicious of those about him.

The passage connected with these thoughts, beginning, "Those who teach princes watchful distrust," probably refers to Henri III and Henri IV. The noble lines, "Courage . . . displays itself . . . as nobly in a doublet as in armour," seem a forerunner of those of Lowell (*Commemoration Ode*):

> Life may be given in many ways,
> And loyalty to truth be sealed
> As bravely in the closet as the field.

Montaigne himself also says in the preceding paragraph, "Valour is not shown in war alone."

On a later page there is a striking account of a scene Montaigne witnessed "when a child" (in 1548, when he was 15 years old). The "great city" was Bordeaux; and the poor gentleman who was killed was named Moneins.

The passage on the next page connects itself with the fact that in May, 1585 (during Montaigne's mayoralty), there was a great review of all the "citizens' companies" of Bordeaux; an occasion of possible excitement and perhaps danger.

The last pages of the Essay are filled with three stories from ancient history; and it winds up with a highly philosophical maxim — not very easy to put in practice.

JACQUES AMYOT, grand almoner of France, told me one day this story to the honour of a prince of ours,[1] — and ours he was, by very good titles, although he was of foreign descent, — that, during our first troubles, at the siege of Rouen, that prince, having been warned by the queen-mother of a conspiracy against his life, and distinctly informed by her letters of the leader in its conduct, who was a gentleman of Anjou or Le Mans, — at that time, with this end in view, frequently with the prince's household, — he told no one of this warning, but the next day, walking on Mont Sainte-Catherine, from which our guns were trained on Rouen (for it was at the time that we were laying siege to it), having by his side the said lord almoner and another bishop, he descried the gentleman he had been told of, and had him summoned before him. When he was in his presence, observing that he was already turning pale and trembling from his conscience sounding the alarm, "Monsieur So-and-so," said the prince, "you suspect why I have sent for you, and your face shews it. You have nothing to conceal from me, for I am so fully acquainted with this affair of yours, that you would only make your plight the worse by trying to cover it. You are aware of this and that thing [which were points [2] of the most secret parts of the plot]; do not, on your life, fail to confess to me the truth about this whole project." When the unfortunate

[1] François, duc de Guise (Le Balafré).

[2] *Les tenants et aboutissants = tout ce à quoi quelqu'un se tient et se rapporte.*

man found that he was caught and convicted, — for every thing had been revealed to the queen by one of the confederates, — he could only, with clasped hands, implore the prince's pardon and mercy, at whose feet he would have thrown himself; but he prevented him from so doing, and went on to say: "Look you — have I ever offended you? have I injured any of your associates by private enmity? It is not three weeks since I first knew you: what motive can have impelled you to undertake my death?" To this the gentleman replied, in a trembling voice, that no private reasons had moved him, but the general interest of his party's cause; and that certain persons had persuaded him that it would be a pious deed to make away with so powerful an enemy of their form of faith by any means whatsoever. "Now," pursued the prince, "I propose to shew you how much milder is the form of faith which I follow than that which you profess. Yours induced you to kill me without hearing me, having received no injury at my hands; and mine commands me to forgive you, convicted as you are of having desired, without cause, to kill me. Now go, take yourself off, and let me never see you here again; and, if you are wise, henceforth in your undertakings take better men than those for your advisers."

The Emperor Augustus, being in Gaul,[1] received reliable warning of a conspiracy that Lucius Cinna was brewing against him. He determined to be revenged, and to that end summoned a council of his friends for the next day. But the intervening night he passed in great disquiet, reflecting that he was about to put to death a young man of good family and a nephew of the great Pompey; and in his dejection conceived several contrary arguments. "How then!" he exclaimed; "shall it be said that I live on in fear and alarm, and that I let my murderer go his way unharmed? Shall he go free, having aimed at my life, which I have brought safely through so many civil wars, so many battles by sea and land, and after I have established universal peace throughout the world? Shall he be absolved, when he had plotted, not simply to murder me, but to sacrifice me?" For the intention was to kill him as he was offering some sacrifice.

[1] See Seneca, *De Clementia*, I, 9.

Then, having been quiet for a time, he began again, in a louder voice, and apostrophised himself: "Why do you live, if it seems to so many people important that you should die? Is there to be no end to your vengeances and your cruelties? Is your life worth so much harm being done to preserve it?"

Livia, his wife, perceiving his perplexities, said to him: "Will feminine counsels be entertained? Do what physicians do: when the usual remedies are of no avail, they try contrary ones. By severity you have hitherto in no wise profited. Lepidus followed Salvidienus; Murena, Lepidus; Cæpio, Murena; Egnatius, Cæpio. Begin to try how mildness and clemency will succeed with you. Cinna is convicted — pardon him; henceforth he will be unable to injure you, and it will redound to your glory."

Augustus was well pleased to have found an advocate of his own inclination, and having thanked his wife and countermanded his friends whom he had summoned to take counsel, ordered that Cinna, quite alone, should be brought before him; and having sent every one from the room and given Cinna a seat, he addressed him thus: "In the first place, Cinna, I ask you to listen quietly: do not interrupt me; I will give you time to reply at your leisure. You know, Cinna, that, having found you in the camp of my enemies, — you not having simply made yourself my enemy, but being so by birth, — I protected you; I put all your property in your hands, and, in short, made you so well-to-do and so at ease, that the victors are envious of the situation of the vanquished. The office in the priesthood which you asked of me, I granted you, having refused it to others whose fathers had always fought by my side. After being so indebted to me, you have proposed to kill me." At these words Cinna exclaimed that such a wicked thought was far from him. "You are not keeping the promise that you made me, Cinna," Augustus continued; "you assured me that I should not be interrupted. Yes, you have proposed to kill me, at such a place, on such a day, with such companions, and in such a manner." Seeing that he was appalled by this information, and that he was silent, no longer because of his bargain to say nothing, but from his crowding thoughts, "Why," he added, "do you do it? Is it to be emperor? To-

day it is ill with public affairs, if I am the only obstacle to your attaining supreme power. You can not even defend your own family, and you lately lost a lawsuit against a mere freedman.[1] What! have you no resources or power in any other matter than to attack the emperor? I renounce the office, if I alone stand in the way of your hopes. Do you think that Paulus or Fabius, that the Cossæans and the Servilians will tolerate you? and so great a throng of nobles — not noble in name alone, but who honour their nobility by their valour?" After many other remarks (for he talked to him for more than two full hours), "Now, go," he said; "I give to you, Cinna, a traitor and parricide, the life that I gave you before as a foe. Let friendship this day begin between us: let us see which of us is the more loyal, I who have given you your life, or you who have accepted it." And so he parted from him. Some time after, he gave him the consulship, lamenting that he [Cinna] had not dared to ask it of him. He was regarded by him [Augustus] thenceforth as a devoted friend, and was made by him his sole heir. Now, after this incident, which happened to Augustus in his fortieth year, there was never any conspiracy or enterprise against him, and he received the due reward of this clemency on his part. But our prince had not the same fortune; for his mildness was unable to protect him from falling afterward into the net of a similar treason.[2] So vain and idle a thing is human circumspection! and amid all our plans, our counsels and precautions, fortune always retains the control of events.

We call physicians lucky when they attain some good result, as if there were no art but theirs which can not sustain itself unaided, and whose bases are too weak to be leaned on with its whole weight, and as if it alone needed to have chance and fortune lend a hand in its operations. I believe the worst or the best of it that you choose, for we have, God be praised! no commerce together. I am different from other men: for I despise it heartily at all times; but when I am ill, instead of arranging a compromise, I begin still more

[1] *Par le faveur d'un simple libertin.*

[2] François de Guise was assassinated at the siege of Orleans, in 1563, by Poltrot de Meré.

to hate it and fear it, and I reply to those who urge me to take physic, that they may at least wait until I have recovered my health and my strength, and have more power to sustain the working and the hazards of their draught. I let Nature do her work, assuming that she is supplied with teeth and claws to defend herself from the assaults that are made upon her, and to maintain this contexture of which she dreads the dissolution. I fear lest in thus aiding her, when she is in close grapple, struggling with the disease, we aid her adversary instead, and burden her with new work.

Now I say that, not in medicine alone, but in many arts more certain, fortune plays a large part. The poetic impulses which carry away him who begets them, and snatch him out of himself — why shall we not ascribe them to his good luck, since he himself confesses that they surpass his ability and his powers, and recognises them as coming from elsewhere than himself, and as being in no wise under his control; just as orators say that they have not under their control those exceptional emotions and agitations which impel them beyond their purpose? It is the same in painting — that at times there escape from the painter's hand strokes surpassing his conception and his knowledge, which draw forth his own admiration and astonish him. But fortune shows even more clearly the share that she has in all these works by the charms and beauties which are found therein, not only without the intention, but even without the knowledge of the workman. A competent reader often discovers in another's writings other perfections than those which the author has consciously imparted to them,[1] and lends to them a richer meaning and aspect.

As for military undertakings, every one can see how large a part fortune has in them. Even in our councils and our deliberations, it is certain that there is an admixture of chance and good luck; for all that our wisdom can do does not amount to much; the more keen and more alert it is, the more weakness it detects in itself, and distrusts itself so much the more. I am of Sylla's opinion,[2] and when I scru-

[1] *Celles que l'autheur y a mises et apperçeües.*

[2] See Plutarch, *How a man may praise himself*, and *Life of Sylla*. This clause was added in the second edition (1582).

tinise closely the most glorious exploits of war, I see, so it seems to me, that those who conduct them employ in them deliberation and advice only as a matter of form, and the larger part of the enterprise they abandon to fortune; and from the trust they have in her aid, they often go beyond the bounds of all judgement. There result chance outbursts of energy and unlooked-for spasms of wrath [1] in their deliberations, which impel them most frequently to make the choice apparently least well founded, and which swell their courage beyond reason; whence it has happened that several great captains of old, in order to give weight to these rash counsels, declared to their soldiers that they were suggested by some inspiration, by some sign or prognostic. Here is the reason why, in this uncertainty and perplexity caused by our inability to see and choose what is most fitting for the difficulties that the varying casualties and circumstances of every event bring with them, the safest way, even if no other consideration suggested it to us, is, in my opinion, to throw oneself on the side on which are the most uprightness and justice; and when one is in doubt as to the shortest road, to take always the straight one; [2] just as in the two examples which I have set forth there is no doubt that it was nobler and more generous in him who had received the wrong to forgive it, than if he had done otherwise. If for the first [3] there was ill success, it should not be attributed to that good intent of his; and we do not know whether, had he taken the contrary course, he would have escaped the end to which his destiny summoned him; and then he would have lost the glory of such humane conduct.

We see in histories very many men moved by this sort of dread, of which the larger number have followed the method of forerunning, by vengeance and by punishments, the conspiracies against them; but I see very few to whom this remedy has been of use — witness so many Roman emperors. He who finds himself in this danger should not hope much either from his strength or from his vigilance; for how

[1] *Il survient des allegresses fortuites et des fureurs estrangeres.*

[2] This clause — "and when . . . straight one" — was added in the second edition (1582).

[3] The duc de Guise.

difficult is it to shield oneself against an enemy who wears the mask of the most assiduous friend we have, and to know the inward desires and thoughts of those who are about us. It avails him little to employ foreign soldiers for his guard, and to be constantly surrounded by a hedge of armed men — he who holds his own life cheap can always make himself master of another's.[1] And then this constant suspicion, which makes the prince doubt every one, must wonderfully torment him. (*b*) For this reason, Dion, being warned that Callipus was watching for the means of bringing about his death, was never minded to search into the matter, saying that he liked better to die than to live in this wretched plight of having to guard himself, not only against his foes, but against his friends as well.[2] A feeling which Alexander shewed forth much more vividly and more courageously by deed, when, having been warned by a letter from Parmenion that Philip, his favourite physician, had been bribed by Darius's money to poison him, at the same moment that he gave Philip the letter to read, he drank off the draught that he [Philip] had handed him.[3] Was not this giving expression to the determination that, if his friends wished to kill him, he consented to their doing so?[4] This prince is the supreme pattern of venturesome deeds; but I know not any feature in his life which shewed, from so many points of view, more firmness, or a more honourable beauty. They who teach princes such watchful distrust, under colour of teaching them [to regard only] their safety, teach them their ruin and their shame. Nothing noble is done without risk. I know a man (*c*) of very valorous and enterprising spirit by nature, (*b*) whose good fortune is marred every day by such arguments as this: "Let him be surrounded by his friends; let him listen to no reconciliation with his former foes; let him stand apart and not trust himself to stronger hands, what-

[1] See Seneca, *Epistle* 4.8.

[2] See Plutarch, *Apothegms of Kings*, *Life of Dion*, and elsewhere.

[3] See Idem, *Life of Alexander;* Quintus Curtius, III, 6.9. Montaigne probably took it from Witart's translation of Arrian's history of Alexander.

[4] In 1588: *La vaillance n'est pas seulement à la guerre* (Valour is not shewn in war alone); omitted in the *Édition Municipale.*

ever promise may be made to him, whatever advantage he may see therein." (*c*) I know another who has forwarded his fortunes beyond all hope by having taken directly contrary advice. The courage of which they seek the glory so eagerly displays itself, when there is need, as nobly in a doublet as in armour; in the study as in camp; with the hand at the side as with hand upraised.[1]

(*b*) Prudence, so sensitive and so circumspect, is the mortal enemy of lofty actions. (*c*) Scipio, to discover the intentions of Syphax, ventured to leave his army, abandoning Spain, still insecure after his recent conquest, and crossed over to Africa in two small barks, trusting himself on hostile territory, to the power of a barbarian king, to an unknown faith, without any pledge, without hostage, under the sole security of the mightiness of his own courage, of his good fortune, and of the promise of his lofty hopes.[2] *Habita fides ipsam plerumque fidem obligat.*[3] (*b*) On the other hand, an ambitious and distinguished life must give way little to suspicions, and must hold a tight rein on them;[4] fear and distrust attract crime and invite it. The most suspicious of our kings[5] assured his transactions chiefly through having voluntarily abandoned and entrusted his life and liberty to the hands of his enemies, showing that he had entire confidence in them, to the end that they might have the same in him. To his legions when they had mutinied and risen in arms against him, Cæsar opposed only the authority of his countenance and the haughtiness of his speech, and counted so fully on himself and his fortune that he did not fear to give himself up and entrust himself to a seditious and rebellious army.

[1] This addition on the margin of the Bordeaux copy is in the handwriting of Mlle. de Gournay; but certain words were stricken out in Montaigne's manner and probably by his hand.

[2] See Livy, XXVIII, 17.

[3] Faith in another often makes reciprocal faith obligatory. — Livy, XXII, 22. It is impossible to reproduce exactly the play upon words permitted in Latin by the two-fold meaning of *fides: trust* (*confidence*), and *good faith.*

[4] *A une vie ambitieuse et fameuse il faut, au rebours, prester peu, et porter la bride courte aux soubçons.*

[5] Louis XI.

(*c*) Stetit aggere fulti
Cespitis, intrepidus vultu; meruitque timeri
Nil metuens.[1]

(*b*) But it is quite true that this stout self-assurance can not be exhibited to the full and sincerely except by those to whom the idea of death and of the worst that may after all happen causes no terror; for to shew it forth tremblingly, and, while in doubt and uncertainty, to aid in an important pacification, avails nothing. It is an excellent means of gaining the heart and good-will of another, to meet him with submission and trust, provided it be done freely and not compelled by any necessity, and with the obligatory condition that we bring thither a serene and pure confidence, our countenance at least clear of all sign of distrust. I saw in my boyhood a gentleman who governed a large city hard pressed by the commotion of a frenzied populace. To suppress the turmoil at the beginning, he decided to go out from a very safe place where he was, and to meet this rebellious mob, which turned out ill for him, and he was miserably killed; but it does not seem to me that his mistake lay so much in the having gone out, for which his memory is commonly reproached, as in the having adopted the course of submission and mildness, and in the having sought to soothe that fury rather by flattering than by commanding, and by beseeching rather than by remonstrating; and I consider that a gracious severity, with a military word of command full of security and confidence, befitting his rank and the dignity of his office, would have had better issue, at least, with greater honour and becomingness. There is nothing less to be hoped for from that monster when thus aroused than humanity and tractableness;[2] it is much more accessible to[3] respect and fear. I should blame him also because, having formed a resolution, which was to my mind rather brave than rash, of throwing himself, powerless and unarmed,[4] into that tempestuous sea of madmen, he should have held it to the end, and should not have dropped the character he had

[1] He stood firmly on a grassy mound, undaunted in bearing; and he deserved to be feared, for he feared nothing. — Lucan, V, 316.

[2] *Douceur.* [3] *Il recevra bien plutost.* [4] *En pourpoinct.*

assumed,[1] whereas when, on a closer view, he became faint-hearted,[2] and the submissive and flattering bearing he had assumed was then exchanged even for an air of terror, his voice and his eyes filled with consternation and repentance, and he, seeking to slink away and hide, inflamed their passions and called them down upon himself.

It was proposed to hold a general muster of different bodies of troops under arms[3] (it is the place for secret revengements, and there is no place where they can be managed with greater security). There were public and notorious symptoms that it boded no good to some persons to whom fell the principal and necessary duty of reviewing them. Many different suggestions were put forward, it being a difficult matter and one of much weight, on which much depended. My opinion was that, above all things, giving any indication of this suspicion should be avoided; and that we should be there, and mingle with the rank and file, with head erect and open countenance; and that, instead of cutting out anything (which the other opinions favoured most), we should, on the contrary, urge the officers to notify the troops to make their volleys full and gallant,[4] in honour of those present, and not to spare their powder. This served to gratify the suspected troops, and engendered thenceforth a mutual and useful confidence between us and them.[5]

(*a*) The course that Julius Cæsar took appears to me the finest that can be. First, he tried, by clemency, to make himself beloved even by his enemies, contenting himself with regard to the conspiracies that were revealed to him by simply making it known that he had been warned about them. That done, he adopted the very noble resolution of awaiting, without dread and without solicitude, whatever might happen to him, taking no thought for himself, and committing himself to the keeping of the gods and

[1] *Il la devoit avaller toute, et n'abandonner ce personnage.*

[2] *Il luy advint . . . de saigner du nez.*

[3] Montaigne refers to the review held at Bordeaux in 1585, during his mayoralty.

[4] *Gaillardes.*

[5] Here ends the 1588 addition, which begins on page 172 *supra.*

of fortune; for surely, that was his frame of mind when he was killed.[1]

(*b*) A stranger said and proclaimed everywhere that he could inform Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, of a way to scent out and discover with absolute certainty the schemes that his subjects hatched against him, if he would give him a round sum of money. Dionysius, having notice of this, had him brought before him, to enlighten him about an art so essential to his preservation. The stranger told him that there was no other art in it than that he should order a talent to be given him, and should boast of having learned an extraordinary secret from him. Dionysius thought this device excellent, and had six hundred crowns counted out to him. It was not likely that he had given so large a sum to an unknown man except as recompense for very useful instruction;[2] and that repute served to keep his enemies in fear. For this reason, princes wisely make public the information they receive of secret plots devised against their lives, in order to have it believed that they are well warned, and that nothing can be undertaken without their smelling it.[3] (*c*) The Duke of Athens did many foolish things in establishing his new tyranny over Florence; but the most notable was this: that, having received the first notice of the factious combinations which the people were forming against him from Mattheo di Morozo, one of the conspirators, he had him put to death, in order to suppress this information, and to avoid its being perceived that any one in the city was weary of his sway.[4]

(*a*) I remember to have read at some time the story of some Roman, a person of rank, who, flying from the tyranny of the Triumvirate, had eluded innumerable times the grasp of his pursuers by his crafty devices. It happened one day that a troop of horse, who were commissioned to capture him, passed very close to a thicket in which he was lurking, and failed to discover him. But, at that juncture, reflecting upon the trouble and difficulties he had already endured

[1] See Suetonius, *Life of Cæsar*, LXXV.
[2] *Apprentissage.* See Plutarch, *Apothegms of Kings*, etc.
[3] *De quoy ils ne sentent le vent.*
[4] See Villani, *Universal History*, part II, 1, 12.

so long, to save himself from the constant and careful search for him that was made in all directions, and [reflecting upon] the little pleasures that he could hope for in such a life, and how much better it would be for him to go once the way of all flesh,[1] than to live always in this extreme fear, he himself recalled them and betrayed his hiding-place, voluntarily abandoning himself to their cruelty, in order to relieve them and himself from further trouble.[2] To summon the hands of one's enemies is a somewhat fantastic step;[3] nevertheless do I believe that it would still be better to take it than to remain in perpetual feverish fear of a casualty which has no remedy. Also, since the preparations we can make for that are full of uneasiness and uncertainty, the better way is to make ourselves ready with becoming assurance for whatever may happen, and derive some consolation from the fact that we are not sure that it will happen.

CHAPTER XXV

OF PEDANTRY

This is one of the simplest in construction of the Essays; it is really about "pedantry." First, Montaigne considers the character of pedants, and the esteem, or rather disesteem, in which they are held, and its causes; and the differences between the pedants of his day and the philosophers of old days. He thinks that men of learning have become contemptible because of the mistaken character of their education, and that neither masters nor scholars are more *able* because of *learning*. "We labour only to fill the memory," he says, "and we leave the understanding and the conscience empty." And then, with a droll little return on himself, he says that this is just what he does in this book; "it is a wonder how nicely this folly finds an example in me." This is a most unmerited little humorous piece of self-blame! His criticism here of works that have no *nourishment* in them is peculiarly inapplicable to his own writings. The sentence, — a very characteristic one, — "a parrot could speak as wisely," shows how little Montaigne could fall into any parrotry of thought or expression.

The next page is the story of a wealthy Roman who fancied himself a man of learning because he had in his pay learned men who talked for

[1] *Passer une fois le pas.*

[2] Montaigne seems to have combined two stories related by Appian.

[3] *D'appeller les mains ennemies, c'est un conseil un peu gaillard.*

him. Such a man resembles "those whose learning resides in their costly libraries."

Montaigne continues in the same vein, insisting that all learning is useless to us that we do not make our own, that we do not *digest*.

The "teachers" of his day, like the sophists in Plato's time, were in Montaigne's eyes "of all men those who promise to be most useful to mankind, and alone of all men they not only do not improve what is entrusted to them . . . but they injure it."

On another page he tells an amusing story of one of these senseless beings whom he had seen at his own house; which leads on to a passage of beautiful, noble praise of his friend Adrianus Turnebus.

Later Montaigne gives an interesting sketch of his views of a proper Civil Service Examination — the passage beginning: "There are some of our Parliaments . . ."

Returning to his former train of thought, Montaigne speaks of learning as "a dangerous weapon" for those who do not know how to use it — and therefore women had better not be trusted with it.

A passage about "this purpose of enriching ourselves" sounds as if it had been written yesterday.

"The reason that I was seeking just now," I think refers to the beginning of the Essay and to his quest for the causes of the low esteem in which men of learning were held.

Then he gets among the ancients, and dwells on the point that the Persians "taught virtue to their children as other nations do letters," in which the Lacedæmonians resembled them; and he speaks of the difference between the education given to the children of Sparta and those of Athens, and in this connection brings Socrates forward.

The last paragraph of the Essay is on the thesis that learning lessens warlike impulses, and it is interesting from the examples taken from Montaigne's own times.

In view of the inferences that may be drawn from the additions made to this Essay in 1595, M. Villey remarks as follows:

"It is worth observing that in 1595 the point of view of Montaigne in this Essay seems somewhat different from what it was in the text of 1580. In 1580 Montaigne was especially inspired by Seneca and by Plutarch, who both criticise only pretended knowledge; and in like manner Montaigne's aim was to combat, as the title indicates, the pedantry of his age; and he expresses strongly his admiration for the men of true learning, for the great philosophers of antiquity. In 1595 he weakens these praises, undoubtedly with reserve, it not being his purpose to correct himself, but, none the less, in a significant manner, he borrows from Plato numerous sarcasms against the philosophers, who seem to him to lack completely practical sense; especially in the additions which close the chapter, he strongly affirms the idea that knowledge is profitable only to a small number of estimable minds, and when spread abroad among the masses, it is injurious to the moral character and to the military spirit."

I WAS often vexed in my boyhood by seeing, in the Italian comedies, a pedant [1] always the fool of the piece, and the title of schoolmaster [2] had a scarcely more honourable significance among us. For being under their control and care, how could I help being sensitive about their reputation? I tried hard to excuse them by the natural disparity there is between most people and persons of unusual judgement and learning, inasmuch as these and those pursue entirely different courses. But in this I wasted my pains,[3] for the men of widest experience were the ones who held them most in contempt; witness our worthy du Bellay: "But I detest above all things pedantic learning." (*b*) And this habit is an ancient one; for Plutarch says that Greek and scholar were words of reproach and scorn among the Romans.[4] (*a*) Afterward, as I grew older, I found that there was a very great reason for this, and that *magis magnos clericos non sunt magis magnos sapientes*.[5] But how it can be that a mind rich in the knowledge of so many things does not thereby become more alive and more awake, and that an uncultivated and commonplace intelligence can retain, without improvement, the arguments and opinions of the most excellent minds that the world has produced, by this I am still perplexed.

(*b*) "To receive so many alien brains and such great and powerful ones," said a daughter of France, the highest of our princesses,[6] to me, speaking of some one or other, "it must be that his own brain crowds itself into a corner, cramps, and diminishes itself, to make room for the others." (*a*) I should be inclined to say that, as plants are choked by too much moisture, (*c*) and lamps by too much oil, (*a*) so the action of the mind, through an excess of study and of subjects, being seized and embarrassed by so great a diversity of things, would lose the power of freeing itself, and

[1] The word is used in its original signification of teacher.

[2] *Magister*.

[3] *Perdois-je mon latin*.

[4] See Plutarch, *Life of Cicero*.

[5] The greatest scholars are not the wisest men. — Proverb, found also in Rabelais, *Gargantua*, I, 39.

[6] Probably Marguerite, afterwards Queen of Navarre.

this burden would keep it bent and cowering.[1] But the fact is otherwise; for our mind expands the more, the more it is filled; and by the examples of old days, it may be seen, quite to the contrary, that men of competence in the handling of public matters, great captains, and eminent counsellors in state affairs, have been also very learned men.

And as to the philosophers, withdrawn from all public employment, they were, in truth, sometimes treated with contempt by the comic poets[2] of their day, (*c*) their opinions and their manners making them ridiculous. Would you make them judges of the merits of a law-suit, of a man's acts? They are quite ready for it! they are even trying to find out whether there is life; whether there is motion; whether man is different from an ox; what it is to act and to suffer; what sort of animals the laws and justice are. Do they speak of the magistrate or to him? they do so with disrespectful and discourteous freedom. Do they hear a prince praised, or a king? to them he is a mere shepherd, lazy as a shepherd, occupied with milking and shearing his flock, but much more roughly than a shepherd. Do you think some man the greater for possessing two thousand acres of land? they scoff at that, accustomed to look upon the whole world as their possession. Do you boast of your nobility because you can reckon seven wealthy ancestors? they think slightingly of you, as having no conception of the universal image of nature, and of how many forbears each of us has had — rich, poor, kings, servants, Greeks, and barbarians; and if you are the fiftieth in descent from Hercules, they deem you absurd to attach value to that gift of fortune.[3] So the vulgar despised them as being ignorant of simple and most common things, and as presumptuous and insolent. But this Platonic description is far removed from what befits those whom we speak of.

(*a*) The ancient philosophers were condemned as being above common customs, as holding in contempt public doings, as having assumed a special and inimitable manner

[1] *Courbe et croupi.*

[2] *Par la liberté Comique.*

[3] This much of the addition of 1595 is translated from the *Theætetus* of Plato, XXIV.

of life, conformed to certain lofty and unusual principles; but these of our day are despised as being below common customs, as incapable of public service, as leading, in the eyes of the vulgar, a life of low and vile condition. (*c*) *Odi homines ignava opera, philosophia sententiæ.*[1] (*a*) As for those philosophers, say I, as they were great in learning, they were even greater in all action. And just as it was told of the geometrician of Syracuse that, when he was aroused from his contemplation to do something practical for the defence of his country, he instantly set on foot terrible engines and forces surpassing all human belief, yet, none the less, himself depised all that handiwork of his, and thought that he had thereby impaired the dignity of his art, of which his works were only, as it were, experiments;[2] so they,[3] when sometimes they were put to the test of action, were seen to soar on so lofty a wing that it clearly appeared that their hearts and minds must be marvellously enlarged and enriched by their understanding of things. (*c*) But some of them, seeing the seat of political government seized upon by incapable men, recoiled from it; and he who asked Crates how long it was necessary to study philosophy received this reply: "Until our armies are not led by donkey-drivers."[4] Heraclitus resigned the kingship to his brother; and when the Ephesians charged him with wasting his time playing with children in front of the temple, "Is not this better worth doing than to rule affairs of state in your companionship?" he asked.[5] (*a*) Others, whose imaginations dwelt above fortune and the world, found the seats of justice, and even the thrones of kings, low and vile. (*c*) And Empedocles refused the kingship which the Agrigentines offered him.[6]

[1] I hate men of cowardly deeds and philosophical phrases. — Pacuvius, in Aulus Gellius, XIII, 8.

[2] See Plutarch, *Life of Marcellus*. This is a condensation of Plutarch's description of the works executed by Archimedes; the thoughts which Montaigne ascribes to Archimedes himself, Plutarch ascribes to Plato.

[3] The philosophers.

[4] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Crates*. Montaigne evidently misread the passage.

[5] See Idem, *Life of Heraclitus*.

[6] See Idem, *Life of Empedocles*.

(*a*) Thales, having sometimes blamed the care taken about domestic affairs, and to get rich, was charged with talking like the fox, since he himself could not succeed therein. The desire came to him to test this, as a pastime; and having, to that end, brought down his knowledge to the service of profit and gain, he set up a commerce which in a year drew in such wealth that those most experienced in that business could scarcely in their whole lives do the like.[1]

(*c*) As to what Aristotle tells us of some persons who called both this man and Anaxagoras and their like, sages and not prudent men, since they did not pay enough heed to matters of more utility,[2] — though I do not clearly conceive this verbal distinction, — it offers no excuse for these persons; [3] and in view of the low and necessitous lot with which they content themselves, we should rather be justified in declaring them to be neither sages nor prudent men.

(*a*) I leave this first reason,[4] and think it better worth while to say that this ill-repute comes from their wretched method in their studies, and that, considering the way in which we are instructed, it is no wonder that neither scholars nor masters become more able, although they may make themselves more learned. In truth, the care and outlay of our fathers aim only at furnishing our heads with learning; concerning good judgement and virtue there is little thought.[5] (*c*) Cry out to our people, of one passer-by, "Oh, the learned man!" and of another, "Oh, the excellent man!" they will not fail to turn their eyes and their respect toward the first.[6] There should be a third exclamation: "Oh, the blockheads!" (*a*) We readily ask ourselves: "Does he know Greek or Latin? Does he write in verse or in prose?" but whether he has become better or more thoughtful — that is the principal thing, and that is left in the background. The enquiry should be, who is the best learned, not who is the most

[1] See Cicero, *De Divin.*, I, 49; Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Thales*.

[2] See Aristotle, *Politics*, I, 7.

[3] *A mes gens;* that is, the philosophers.

[4] That is, the very great reason why the *clericos* are not *magis magnos sapientes*. See page 179, *supra*.

[5] *Du jugement et de la vertu, peu de nouvelles.*

[6] See Seneca, *Epistle* 88.

learned.[1] We labour only to fill the memory, and we leave the understanding (*c*) and the conscience (*a*) empty. Just as birds go at times in quest of grain and carry it in their beaks without tasting it, to feed it to their little ones,[2] so our pedants go about picking up learning from books and take it only in their tongues, simply to void it and make parade of it.[3]

(*c*) It is a wonder how nicely this folly finds an example in me. Is it not doing the same thing that I do in the greater part of this composition? I go about, here and there, carrying away from books sentences which please me, not to keep them in mind, for I have no memory,[4] but to transport them hither, where, to tell the truth, they are no more mine than when in their original place. We are, in my opinion, learned only through immediate knowledge, not through that of the past, as little as through that of the future. (*a*) But, what is worse, their pupils and their little ones are in no wise nourished and fed by it: instead, it passes from hand to hand, for the sole purpose of making a show of it, of talking of it to others, and of telling stories from it, as it were false coin, useless for any other purpose and business than as counters and for calculation.[5] (*c*) *Apud alios loqui didicerunt, non ipsi secum.*[6] *Non est loquendum, sed gubernandum.*[7] Nature, to show that there is nothing rude in what is guided by her, causes the birth, in nations least cultivated by art, of productions of the intelligence which often vie with the most artistic productions. On my present subject, how subtle is the Gascon proverb, derived from the bag-pipe: "Bouha prou bouha, mas a remuda lous ditz qu'em" (Blow hard,

[1] See Seneca, *Epistle* 89, near the end.

[2] See Plutarch, *How to know whether one improves in the practice of virtue.*

[3] *Mettre au vent.*

[4] *Non pour les garder, car je n'ay point de gardoires.*

[5] See Plutarch, *How to know whether one improves in the practice of virtue.*

[6] They have learned to talk with others, not with themselves. — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, V, 36.

[7] The important thing is not talk, but conduct. — Seneca, *Epistle* 108.

blow; but we have still to move the fingers).[1] (*a*) We learn to say: "Cicero so says; such is Plato's character; these are Aristotle's very words." But what do we ourselves say? what is our judgement?[2] A parrot could speak as wisely. This sort of thing reminds me of that wealthy Roman[3] who had taken pains to find, at very great expense, men competent in all branches of knowledge, whom he kept constantly about him, so that when, among his friends, the occasion should arise to talk of one thing or another, they should come to his assistance, and should be quite ready to furnish him, this one with a speech, that one with a line of Homer — each according to his studies;[4] and he believed this learning to be his own, because it was in the heads of his attendants; and as those also do,[5] whose learning resides in their costly libraries. (*c*) I am acquainted with a man who, when I ask him what he knows, asks me for a book, that he may show me; and he would not venture to tell me that he had the itch on his rump, without first going to the lexicon,[6] to study about the itch and about the rump.

(*a*) We take into our keeping the opinions and knowledge of others, and that is all; we should make them ours. We much resemble the man who, having need of fire, should go to his neighbour in search of it, and, having found a fine big blaze there, should stay to warm himself, quite forgetting to carry any home.[7] What does it avail us to have a stomach full of food, if it does not digest, if it does not become transformed within us, if it does not increase our size and strength? Do we think that Lucullus, whom letters made and fashioned into so great a captain, without experience,[8]

[1] This is Montaigne's own translation: M. Villey suggests that the meaning is: "To blow is easy enough, but we have to move the fingers to play on the bag-pipe." — It is difficult to see the connection between this whole interpolated passage and the subject under discussion.

[2] See Seneca, *Epistle* 33.7.

[3] Calvisius Sabinus. See Seneca, *Epistle* 27.5.

[4] *Selon son gibier.*

[5] That is, as those also remind me.

[6] *Lexicon.* This word had not been used before Montaigne except by Ronsard; it is in no French dictionary.

[7] See Plutarch, *On Hearing.*

[8] See Cicero, *Academic Questions*, II, 1. In 1580–1588, this passage read: *si grand capitaine et si advisé, sans l'essay et sans experience.*

regarded them as we do? (*b*) We allow ourselves to lean so heavily on the shoulders of others, that we enfeeble our own powers. Do I desire to arm myself against the fear of death? It is from Seneca's storehouse. Do I desire to obtain consolation for myself or another? I borrow it from Cicero. I should have found it in myself if I had been practised in so doing. I do not like this derived and solicited competency. (*a*) Even if we could be learned with another's learning, in any case we can be wise only with our own wisdom.

Μισῶ σοφιστὴν, ὅστις οὐχ αὑτῷ σόφος.[1]

(*c*) *Ex quo Ennius: Nequicquam sapere sapientem, qui ipse sibi prodesse non quiret.*[2]

(*b*) Si cupidus, si
Vanus et Euganea quamtumvis vilior agna.[3]

(*c*) *Non enim paranda nobis solum, sed fruenda sapientia est.*[4] Dionysius derided the grammarians who investigate so carefully the misfortunes of Ulysses and are ignorant of their own; the musicians who tune their flutes, but do not tune their morals; the orators who study to speak justly but not so to act.[5]

(*a*) If our minds do not go a livelier pace,[6] if we have not a sounder judgement, I would as lief that the student had passed his time playing at tennis; at least, his body would be the better for it. See him when he returns home after thus spending fifteen or sixteen years: there is nothing in the world so unfitted to be employed; all the gain you can see in

[1] I hate the wise man who is not wise in his own affairs. — Euripides, in Stobæus, *Sermon* 3. (See also Cicero, *Epistulæ Familiares*, XIII, 15.) In 1580–1588, Montaigne supplied a French translation: *Je haï, dict-il, le Sage qui n'est pas sage pour soy-mesmes.*

[2] As to which Ennius [says]: Fruitless is wisdom to the wise man if he himself can not profit by it. — Cicero, *De Off.*, III, 15.

[3] If greedy, false, and weaker than a Euganean lamb. — Juvenal, *Satires*, VIII, 14.

[4] For wisdom should not only be acquired by us, but be enjoyed. — Cicero, *De Fin.*, I, 1; but Montaigne probably borrowed it from Justus Lipsius, *Politics*, I, 10.

[5] For "Dionysius" read "Diogenes the Cynic." See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Diogenes*.

[6] *Un meilleur branle.*

him is that his Latin and Greek have made him prouder and more vain-glorious than when he left home. (*c*) He should bring his mind back well filled; he does bring it back only swollen; he has merely inflated it instead of fattening it. These teachers, as Plato remarks of the Sophists,[1] who are closely akin to them, are of all men those who promise to be most useful to mankind; and alone of all men, they not only do not improve what is entrusted to them, as a carpenter does and a mason, but they injure it and exact payment for injuring it. If the rule were followed which Protagoras proposed to his disciples,[2] that they should either pay him his own price, or should swear in the temple what value they set on the profit they had received from his teaching, and according to that should recompense his painstaking — our pedagogues would find themselves disappointed, were they referred back to the asseveration of my own experience.

(*a*) My Perigordian dialect very wittily calls these dullards[3] "Lettreferits" — to whom letters have dealt a sledge-hammer blow, as they say. In truth, they seem in most cases to have sunk even below common sense. For you see the peasant and the cobbler go simply and naturally about their business, talking of what they know; these men, because they would exalt themselves and bluster with the knowledge that floats on the surface of their brains, are always entangling and encumbering themselves. They let fall fine words, but that another may apply them; they are familiar with Galen, but know nothing of disease; they have gone so far as to fill their heads with laws, but none the more have they apprehended the chief point of the case; they know the theoric of every thing — find one of them who can put it in practice. I have seen, in my house, a friend of mine, in intercourse with such a man, concoct, by way of pastime, a farrago of nonsense, incoherent sentences, made up of borrowed phrases, — save that it was often interlarded with words appropriate to their discussion, — and thus keep this dunce debating for a whole day, thinking always that he was answering the arguments which were brought against

[1] See Plato, *Meno*, XXVIII.
[2] See Idem, *Protagoras*, XVI.
[3] *Sçavanteaux*. *Lettreferits* = letter-stricken.

him. None the less, he was a man of letters and of reputation (*b*) and one who had a high position.[1]

Vos, O patritius sanguis, quos vivere par est
Occipiti cæco, posticæ occurrite sannæ.[2]

(*a*) Whoever shall look closely at this class of persons, which is very widespread, will find, as I have, that, for the most part, they understand neither themselves nor others, and that, while their memory is quite full, their judgement is wholly empty, unless their nature has of itself fashioned them otherwise; as I have seen with Adrianus Turnebus, who, having no other profession but letters, in which he was, in my opinion, the greatest man who had been for a thousand years, had nevertheless nothing pedantic about him save the way he wore his gown, and something in his external manner which could never be formed into courtliness — which are mere trifles. (*b*) And I detest people who find it harder to put up with a gown awry than with a soul awry, and who see in a man's salutation, in his demeanour, and in his boots, what sort of man he is. (*a*) For within, his was the most polite soul in the world. I have often purposely drawn him into talk far removed from his experience: he was so clear-sighted, his apprehension was so quick, his judgement so sound, that it seemed as if he had never had other occupation than war and statecraft. Those are beautiful and powerful natures —

(*b*) Queis arte benigna
Et meliore luto finxit præcordia Titan[3] —

(*a*) which carry themselves rightly in spite of a poor education. Now it is not enough that our education should not spoil us: it must change us for the better.[4]

There are some of our parliaments which, when they are to admit magistrates, examine them only upon their learn-

[1] *Une belle robe.*

[2] O you of patrician blood, whom nature has made blind to all that lies behind you, turn and face the grimaces that are made behind your back. — Persius, *Satires*, I, 61.

[3] Whose hearts the Titan fashioned with kindly art and with better clay. — Juvenal, *Satires*, XIV, 34.

[4] In 1580–1588: *Et qu'elle nous amende, ou elle est vaine et inutile.*

ing; others add to this a test of their understanding, giving them some case to pass judgement upon. These latter seem to me to have much the better method; and while both these qualities are necessary, and it is essential that both should exist, yet in truth that of learning is less valuable than that of judgement; the last can get along without the first, but not the first without the last. For, as that Greek verse says,—

Ὡς οὐδὲν ἡ μάθησις ἦν μὴ νοὺς παρῇ,[1]—

Of what use is learning, if understanding is lacking? Would God that for the good of our judicature those companies were found as well supplied with understanding and conscience as they are even now with learning. (*c*) *Non vitæ sed scholæ discimus.*[2] (*a*) Now we must not fasten learning to the mind, but incorporate it therewith;[3] with it we must not sprinkle the mind — we must colour it;[4] and if it does not change the mind and improve its imperfect state, surely it is much better to leave it alone; it is a dangerous weapon, which impedes and injures its master if it is in a feeble hand which does not know how to use it, (*c*) *ut fuerit melius non didicisse.*[5] (*a*) Perchance this is the reason that neither we nor the church demand much learning of women, and that Francis, Duke of Brittany, son of Jean the Fifth, when they suggested to him his marriage to Isabeau of Scotland, and added that she had been brought up simply and without any instruction in letters, replied that he liked her the better for that, and that a woman knew enough when she knew how to distinguish between the shirt and the doublet of her husband.[6]

[1] Stobæus, *Sermon* 3. Montaigne translates the verse after quoting it.

[2] We learn, not about life, but about matters of discussion. — Seneca, *Epistle* 106. Montaigne took the sentence from the *Politics* of Justus Lipsius.

[3] See Seneca, *Epistles* 71 (near the end) and 110.

[4] See Idem., *Epistle* 36.3.

[5] So that it had been better not to have learned at all. — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, II, 4.

[6] See G. Corrozet: *Les divers propos memorables des nobles et illustres hommes de la chrestienté.*

In truth, it is not so great a marvel as it is considered, that our ancestors did not set great store by learning,[1] and that now it is found only by accident in the chief councils of our kings; and if this purpose of enriching ourselves, — which alone is set before us to-day,[2] — by means of jurisprudence, of medicine, of pedagogy, and even of divinity, did not keep it in credit, you would find it doubtless in as wretched plight as it ever was. Why not? if it teaches us neither to think well nor to do well? (*c*) *Postquam docti prodierunt, boni desunt.*[3]

All other knowledge is harmful to him who has not the knowledge of goodness. But the reason I was seeking just now,[4] would it not also come from this, that, since our studies in France have no other aim than profit, — few whom Nature has destined from birth for functions more noble than lucrative devote themselves to letters, or for but a short time (being withdrawn, before they have taken a liking for them, to a vocation which has nothing in common with books), — there are ordinarily left to apply themselves to study only persons of small means who are therein seeking a livelihood? And the minds of those persons being, both by nature and by home training and example, of the poorest quality, make a false application of the fruit of knowledge; for it is not hers to give light to that mind which has none, or to make a blind man see; it is not her business to supply him with vision, but to train his vision, to direct its steps, provided that it has well-made and strong feet and legs of its own. An excellent drug is learning, but no drug is powerful enough to keep itself from change and corruption if there are baneful qualities in the vessel that contains it. A man may have clearness of sight and not see straight;[5] and consequently he sees the good and does not follow it, sees know-

[1] *Des lettres;* that is "literary learning," so to speak. The pronouns that follow are awkward and confusing, if used in the plural.

[2] *Nous est aujourd'hui proposée.* The earlier editions read *en bute* for *proposée;* the change seems scarcely an improvement.

[3] Since learned men have appeared, good men are lacking. — Seneca, *Epistle* 95.

[4] That is, the reason for the low esteem in which men of learning were held. See the beginning of the Essay.

[5] *Tel a la veue clere, qui ne l'a pas droite.*

ledge and makes no use of it. The chief precept of Plato, in his *Republic*,[1] is to assign to its citizens their offices according to their natures. Nature can do and does every thing. The lame are ill adapted to bodily exercises, and lame minds to mental exercises; degenerate and common minds are unworthy of philosophy. When we see a man ill shod, we say it is no wonder, if he is a shoemaker; in like manner it seems to me that experience often shows to us a physician worse physicked, a divine less amended, a scholar less able, than any other. Aristo Chius had in old times grounds for saying that philosophers were harmful to their listeners, inasmuch as the greater number of minds are not adapted to profit by such instruction, which, if it does not lead to good, leads to evil: *asotos ex Aristippi, acerbos ex Zenonis schola exire.*[2]

(*a*) In that excellent system of education which Xenophon attributes to the Persians,[3] we find that they taught virtue to their children as other nations teach letters. (*c*) Plato says[4] that, in their royal family, the oldest son was brought up thus: after birth he was given over, not to women, but to those eunuchs who had the highest reputation in the king's household because of their virtue. They assumed the duty of making his body beautiful and sound, and after seven years they taught him to ride and to hunt. When he had reached his fourteenth year, they placed him in the hands of four men: the wisest, the most upright, the most temperate, and the bravest of the nation. The first taught him religion, the second to be always truthful, the third to make himself master of unworthy desires, the fourth to fear nothing.

(*a*) It is a matter worthy of very serious consideration, that, in that excellent form of government of Lycurgus,[5] — in truth, it was a prodigy from its perfection,— although so heedful of the bringing up of children as its principal office, and in the very resting-place of the Muses, there is so little mention made of scholarship; as if those noble-minded

[1] Near the end of book III, and near the beginning of book IV.

[2] They go forth from the school of Aristippus debauched, from that of Zeno soured. — Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.*, III, 31.

[3] See *Cyropædeia*, I.

[4] See the *First Alcibiades*.

[5] See Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians*, and *Life of Lycurgus*.

youths, disdaining any other yoke than that of virtue, had to be supplied only with masters in valour, discretion, and justice, instead of masters in learning; (*c*) an example which Plato followed in his *Laws*.[1]

(*a*) The manner of their [2] teaching was to put questions to them of judgement of men and of actions; and if they condemned or praised this person or that act, they were required to give their reasons for what they said, and by this method they, at one and the same time, sharpened their understanding and learned the law. Astyages, in Xenophon, asks Cyrus to tell him about his last lesson.[3] "In our school," he says, "there was a big boy who, having a small jacket, gave it to a schoolmate who was smaller than he, and took from him his jacket, which was larger. Our master having made me the judge of the disagreement, I decided that things should be left as they were, and that both boys seemed to be better provided for by this arrangement. Whereupon he pointed out to me that I had done wrong, for I had gone no further than to consider the suitableness, and justice ought before all else to have been satisfied, which demanded that no one should be constrained about what belonged to him." And he says that he was flogged for this, just as we are in our village [schools] for forgetting the aorist of τύπτω. A schoolmaster of to-day [4] might harangue me at length *in genere demonstrativo*, before he could convince me that his system is equal to that one. They chose to shorten the way; and since learning, even when it is taken in a direct manner,[5] can teach us only discretion, loyalty, and resolution, they chose to put their children from the beginning in the midst of facts,[6] and to instruct them, not by hearsay, but by the test of action, shaping and moulding them vigorously, not by precepts and words alone, but chiefly by examples and works, to the end that knowledge should not be a thing lodged in the mind,[7] but its complexion and habit; that it should not be an acquisition, but

[1] Near the beginning. [2] That is, the Persians'.
[3] See *Cyropædeia*, I, 3. It was the mother of Astyages who asked Cyrus the question.
[4] *Mon regent.* [5] *De droit fil.*
[6] *Au propre des effets.* [7] *Afin que ce ne fut une science en leur ame.*

a natural endowment. Regarding this subject, some one asked Agesilaus what in his opinion children should learn. "What they must do when they are men," he replied.[1] It is no wonder that such an education produced results so admirable.

Men used to go to the other cities of Greece, it is said, in search of orators, painters, and musicians, but to Lacedæmon for legislators, magistrates, and generals; at Athens they learned to talk wisely, here to do wisely; there to extricate themselves from a sophistical argument and to frustrate the imposture of words craftily intertwined, here to extricate themselves from the allurements of pleasure and to frustrate with a high heart the threats of fortune and of death; there men were occupied about words, here about things; there there was continual exercising of the tongue, here continual exercising of the mind. Wherefore it is not strange that, when Antipater demanded of them fifty children as hostages, they replied, altogether contrary to what we should do, that they would rather give twice as many grown men, at so high a cost did they value the loss of the education of their country.[2] When Agesilaus invites Xenophon to send his children to Sparta to be educated, it is not to learn rhetoric or dialectics, but to learn, so he says, the noblest art that there is, namely, the art of obedience and of command.[3] (*c*) It is very amusing to see how Socrates, after his fashion, laughs at Hippias[4] when he tells him how he has earned, chiefly in certain small hamlets in Sicily, a good sum of money by teaching, and that in Sparta he has not earned a farthing; that they are stupid folk, who can neither measure nor reckon, who make no account either of grammar or of rhythm, caring only to know the succession of their kings, the rise and fall of states, and such a jumble of idle stories. And at the end of it all, Socrates, forcing him to admit step by step the excellence of their form of public government, and the happiness and virtue of their private life, leaves him to divine, in conclusion, the uselessness of his occupation.

[1] See Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians.*
[2] See *Ibid.*
[3] See *Ibid.*, and *Life of Agesilaus.*
[4] See Plato, *Hippias Major.*

Examples teach us, both in the case of military concerns and in all others like them, that the study of letters more softens and weakens men's spirits than strengthens them and fits them for the fight.[1] The state which appears at the present time to be the most powerful in the world is that of the Turks, a people brought up to prize arms and to despise letters in equal measure. I find Rome to have been more valiant before she became learned.[2] In our day the most warlike nations are the most rude and ignorant: the Scythians, the Parthians, Tamburlaine, are examples that prove this. When the Goths ravaged Greece, what saved all the libraries from being burned was that one of the invaders spread abroad the idea that they had better leave that sort of article untouched to their enemies, as likely to divert them from military training and absorb them in sedentary and lazy pursuits. When our King Charles the Eighth found himself master of the kingdom of Naples and of a large part of Tuscany, almost without drawing the sword from the scabbard, the noblemen of his suite ascribed this unhoped-for facility of conquest to the fact that the princes and nobles of Italy were more occupied in making themselves sharp-witted and learned, than sturdy and warlike.

CHAPTER XXVI

OF THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

This Essay, I think, is one of the first in which Montaigne really tried the force of his own wing, when he first left the nest where he had been "brooded" by Plutarch and Seneca and the other ancient authors, and where the historians of his own day were his companions. Now, no longer merely hopping from twig to twig, he struck out into the open air and under the wide sky with bolder flight.

Several indications in its pages make it certain that it was written in 1579 or 1580, that is, seven or eight years later than most of the preceding Essays. And this circumstance gives a peculiar touch and emphasis to his summing up, in the first pages, of his own capacities and abilities.

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[1] *Les fermit et aguerrit.*

[2] Cf. *infra*, Book II, chap. 12: *La vieille Rome me semble avoir bien porté de plus grande valeur, et pour la paix et pour la guerre, que cette Rome sçavante qui se ruyna soy-mesme.*

It is not too fanciful, I think, to trace here some indication of a perhaps scarcely conscious break between his earlier intellectual life of incoherent but fertilising reading, and his later life of incoherent but fruitful thinking, of which these Essays are the record.

"History," he says, "is my chief pursuit in the way of books." His reader continually appreciates how great an influence Montaigne's knowledge of historic thought and facts had upon the formation of his own ideas. And in the education of a child Montaigne believed that history should hold a capital place. The object of education for him was to learn how to live reasonably, an art that can be learned only by personal study of life; and in M. Villey's words: "History is life treasured up in books. It is an indefinite prolongation of our experience."[1]

The next sentence the perceptive reader has been waiting for through all the preceding pages, and through all the following ones he hears it echo: "Poetry, which I love with a special inclination."[2] How well, how nobly, how vigorously he loved the poets, we shall learn from later pages. Sainte-Beuve says truly: "No French writer, including the rightly called poets, has had as high an idea of poetry as he."

Like the greater thinker of ancient days, Plato, whose vein of poetic thought lay still deeper — so did the thinker and poet, Montaigne, write of Education. Not because Plato did, but because to such minds the breeding of the race seems the essential thing. The making of legislators was in their eyes of more importance than the making of laws.

Montaigne fully appreciates the arduousness of the work. "The greatest and most important difficulty," he says, "of human knowledge seems to lie where it concerns itself with the bringing up and education of children."

Montaigne had no thought of writing for posterity as he penned these quiet and simple pages. He felt only that, having lately been thinking and writing about *pedantisme*, it would interest and please him now to write a friendly letter to a pretty lady whom he had known as a young girl (being her father's familiar friend), whose marriage (in 1579) he had lately helped to arrange, and who was soon going to present her husband, he hoped, with a son and heir. How shall this boy be educated? As carelessly and ignorantly and ineffectually as many young nobles of the day? As strangely as Montaigne himself? No, Montaigne thinks, let it be reasonably and intelligently. And so thinking, he lays down the main lines of an education that to-day could for the most part be bettered only by being carried further; an education for boys — girls were not in his mind.[3]

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[1] *Livres d'Histoire Moderne, utilisés par Montaigne*, p. 19.

[2] See Book I, chap. 37: "From my earliest youth poetry has had the power to pierce and transport me" (1595).

[3] A few passages may be recognised as applying more to the education that men should give themselves than to that suitable for a youth. When Montaigne says: "Let him make him sift every thing," M. Félix Hémon justly remarks (*Cours de Littérature — Montaigne*): "To examine

These lines have been followed by the thinkers who have succeeded Montaigne, and the path they made by hacking and hewing is the road — the highway of education — along which we now lead our children — our sons — as a matter of course. It must never be forgotten in reading Montaigne's views on this topic, that they were original in large measure. Rabelais was to some degree his precursor, Erasmus also, and other less well-known men; but Montaigne was the forerunner of Locke and of Rousseau, the two writers who have most influenced the principles of education, the one in England, the other in France (Locke 1632–1704; Rousseau 1712–1778). The torch has passed from one hand to another of "educators."

To Madame Diane de Foix, Countess of Gurson [1]

I NEVER knew a father who, however feeble or deformed his son might be, failed to acknowledge him; not, to be sure (unless he be completely bewildered by this feeling), that he does not perceive his defect; but, none the less, he is his own. And I, too, I see better than any one else that here are but the idle musings of a man who has conceived in his childhood only the outer covering of learning,[2] and has retained of it merely a general and shapeless impression; a little of every thing and nothing thoroughly, after the French fashion. For, in fine, I know that there is a science of medicine, of jurisprudence, four divisions of mathematics,[3] and, roughly, what they aim at; (*c*) and perchance I know, also, the contribution of sciences in general to the service of our lives. (*a*) But as for pushing the matter further and biting my nails over the study of Aristotle,[4] (*c*) the monarch of modern learning, (*a*) or persisting in any branch of knowledge, I have never

every thing, to sift every thing, to accept nothing simply on authority and on credit, suggests in advance the Cartesian system, admirable for men but difficult of application in the education of boys, and almost impossible in that of children, of whom there would be danger of making precocious reasoners and precocious sceptics."

[1] Charlotte-Diane de Foix was the daughter of Frédéric de Foix, comte de Candale, and of Françoise de la Rochefoucauld. In 1579, she married her cousin, Louis de Foix, comte de Gurson, who, with his two brothers, was killed at the battle of Moncrabeau, in 1587.

[2] *Qui n'a gousté des sciences que la crouste premiere en son enfance.*

[3] Arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy.

[4] In 1580–1588: *estude de Platon, ou d'Aristote.*

done it.[1] (*c*) Nor is there any art of which I can sketch so much as the first outlines. And there is no child of the middle forms who may not think he knows more than I, who have not the ability to examine him on his easiest lesson, at least, after its manner. And if I must do this, I am forced, ineptly enough, to draw from it some matter of common talk, with regard to which I examine his native judgement — a lesson that is as unfamiliar to him as his is to me. I have not been familiar with any solid book, except Plutarch and Seneca, from whom I draw like the Danaïdes, filling and emptying incessantly. So doing, something of theirs clings to this paper; to myself, so little that it is nothing.

(*a*) History is my chief pursuit in the way of books; or poetry, which I love with a special inclination. For, as Cleanthes said,[2] just as the voice, when confined within the narrow channel of a trumpet, comes forth more penetratingly and more strongly, so it seems to me that the thought, being compressed within the various forms of verse, darts forth more briskly and strikes me with a livelier impact. As for the native faculties that are in me, whereof here is the trial flight, I feel them bend beneath the burden; my ideas and my judgement grope their way, staggering and stumbling and tripping; and when I have gone as far as I can, still I am in no wise content; I see, but with a disturbed and clouded vision, other regions beyond, which I can not clearly distinguish. And venturing to treat heedlessly of whatever comes into my head, and in this using only my own native resources, if it happens, as it often does, that I meet, in good authors, with the same topics that I have undertaken to discuss, — as I have but now done in Plutarch, in his discourse on the power of the imagination,[3] — on realising how weak and insignificant, how dull and lifeless I am, compared with those writers, I feel compassion or contempt for myself. But I solace myself with the fact that my opinions have the honour of often meeting with theirs, (*c*) and that I follow after, although a long way behind them, saying that they are right.[4] (*a*) Also I have this [quality], which not every one

[1] The editions of 1580–1588 add: *ce n'est pas mon occupation.*
[2] See Seneca, *Epistle* 108.10.
[3] See Plutarch, *Table-Talk.*
[4] *Disant que voire.*

has, of recognising the extreme difference between them and me; and, notwithstanding, I let my conceptions go their way, as feeble and trivial as when I gave birth to them, without plastering and patching up the faults which this comparison has revealed to me. (*c*) A man must have strong loins to attempt to march in the same line with such as these.[1] (*a*) The indiscreet writers of our time, who intersperse in their worthless works whole passages from the ancient authors, to give themselves reputation, do just the opposite. For the infinite difference in brilliancy gives to their work an aspect so pallid, so dull, and so ugly, that by doing thus they lose much more than they gain.

(*c*) There were [of old] two contrary humours. The philosopher Chrysippus scattered through his books, not passages simply, but whole works, of other authors, and in one the "Medea" of Euripides; and Apollodorus said that, if there were cut out of his work what was foreign to it, the paper would be blank.[2] Epicurus, on the other hand, in the three hundred volumes that he left, had not introduced a single alien citation.[3]

(*a*) It happened the other day that I came upon such a passage.[4] I had dragged languidly along through French words so bloodless, so fleshless, and so void of substance and of sense, that they were really only French words. At the end of a long and wearisome road, I came upon a lofty, ornate fragment, rising to the clouds. Had I found the slope gradual and the ascent a little prolonged, the thing would have been pardonable; but it was a steep so sheer and abrupt that, from the first six words, I knew that I had escaped into heaven. Thence I discerned the pit from which I had come, so far below and so deep, that I have never since had the courage to go down again into it. If I should stuff out one of my discourses with these rich spoils,[5] it would throw too much light on the stupidity of the others.

[1] This sentence substituted for *car autrement j'engendrois des monstres: comme font les ecrivains indiscrets*, etc., of the earlier editions.

[2] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Chrysippus*.

[3] See Idem, *Life of Epicurus*.

[4] That is, one of the passages borrowed from other authors by "the indiscreet writers of our time."

[5] *Peintures* in earlier editions.

(*c*) To reprehend my own faults in another seems to me no more intolerant [1] than to reprehend, as I often do, those of another in myself. We must impeach them everywhere, and deprive them of every place of sanctuary. I know well how audaciously I myself often attempt to make myself equal to my purloinings, to march cheek by jowl with them, not without a rash hope that I can delude the eyes of the judges from distinguishing them; but as much by favour of my use of them, as by favour of my original ideas and my vigour. And again, I do not contend with those ancient champions all at once, hand to hand, but by repeated hits, trivial and slight touches. I do not persist, I simply examine them, and I do not go so far as I think of going. If I could keep even with them, I should do well, for I take them on only at their ablest.[2] To do what I have detected some in doing; to protect oneself with another's armour so completely as not to show even the ends of one's fingers; to clothe one's idea with old-time conceptions patched up here and there [3] (which is easy for men of learning on a subject common to all) — this, in those who seek to conceal them, and to make them seem their own, is, in the first place, wrongdoing and cowardice, because, having nothing in their own resources by which to bring themselves forward, they aim to present themselves by a purely alien value; and besides, it is great folly to be content with obtaining by fraud the ignorant approbation of the vulgar, while discrediting themselves in the eyes of intelligent persons whose praise alone has weight, and who turn up their noses at this borrowed veneer. For my part, there is nothing which I less desire to do. I do not quote others, save the more fully to express myself.[4] This does not concern the "centos" which are published as such; and I have seen some very ingenious ones, among others one under the name of Capilupus,[5] be-

[1] *Incompatible.*

[2] *Si je leur pouvoy tenir palot, je serois honneste homme, car je ne les entreprens que par où ils sont les plus roides.*

[3] *Conduire son dessein sous les inventions anciennes rappiecées par cy par la.*

[4] *Je ne dis les autres, sinon pour d'autant plus me dire.*

[5] The reference is to *Lelii Capilupi cento ex Virgilio de vita monacorum* (Venice, 1543).

sides the ancient ones. There are minds which manifest themselves, both elsewise and in this wise, as Lipsius, in the learned and laborious structure of his "Politics." [1] (*a*) I mean to say [2] that, however this may be, and of whatever worth these idle thoughts of mine,[3] I have not planned to conceal them, any more than a portrait of myself, bald and turning gray, in which the painter had drawn, not a perfect face, but mine.[4] For likewise these are the humours and opinions personal to me; I give them out as what I believe, not as what is to be believed; I aim here only at revealing myself, who may perchance be different to-morrow, if fresh experience changes me. I have no authority to be believed, nor do I desire to be so, feeling myself too poorly instructed to instruct another.

Some one who had read the preceding pages [5] said to me the other day, at my house, that I ought to have enlarged a little on the subject of the education of children. Well, madame, if I have any competence on that subject, I can make no better use of it than to make a present of it to the little man who threatens soon to make a happy exit from you (you are too noble by nature [6] to begin otherwise than with a boy); for, having had so large a part in the arrangement of your marriage,[7] I have some right and interest in the greatness and prosperity of all that comes from it; besides that, the long-standing claim that you have upon my service well constrains me to desire honour, good, and profit for whatever concerns you. But, really, I know nothing of this matter except that the greatest and most weighty difficulty in human knowledge seems to lie at that point where it deals with the nurture and education of children. (*c*) Just as in agriculture the methods that precede planting are certain and easy, and the same with planting itself; but after what is planted has taken on life, there is a great variety of methods, and much difficulty in raising it; in like manner with

[1] *Politica, sive civilis doctrinæ* (Leyden, 1589).

[2] Recurring to the point at which the interpolation of the *Édition Municipale* begins, on page 198.

[3] *Inepties.*

[4] See *infra*, Book II, chap. 17.

[5] Chap. 25, "Of Pedantry."

[6] *Genereux* (Latin *generosus*).

[7] He had signed the contract as proxy for the bridegroom's parents.

men, there is little skill in planting them, but after they are born, we have a varied burden, full of toil and anxiety, in training and nurturing them.[1] (*a*) The display of their inclinations is so slight and so obscure at that tender age, the promises so uncertain and so deceitful, that it is difficult to base on them sure judgements. (*b*) Look at Cymon, look at Themistocles, and a thousand others, how inconsistent they were with themselves.[2] The young of bears and dogs show their native inclination; but men, being cast forthwith into the midst of usages, opinions, and laws, are easily changed or disguised.[3] (*a*) Yet it is hard to overcome the natural propensities; whence it happens that, for lack of having fitly chosen their path, we often labour to no purpose, and employ much of our life in training children to things in which they can not find a footing. Howbeit, in this difficulty my judgement is to direct them always to the best and most profitable things, and that we should pay little heed to the slight conjectures and prognostications that we derive from the impulses of their childhood. (*c*) Plato even, in his Republic, seems to me to give them too much authority.[4]

(*a*) Learning is a noble adornment, madame, and a marvellously useful tool, notably to persons raised to such a degree of fortune as you are. In fact, it is of no true use in mean and low hands. It is much more proud to lend its resources to conduct a war, to rule a people, to cultivate the friendship of a prince or a foreign nation, than to draft a dialectical argument, or to argue an appeal, or concoct a mixture for pills. And so, madame, because I believe that you will not forget this portion of the education of your children, you who have tasted its delights and who are of a lettered race, — for we have still the writings of those former Comtes de Foix from whom monsieur le comte, your husband, and you are both descended; and François, Monsieur de Candale, your uncle, gives birth every day to other writings which will extend the knowledge of this quality of

[1] See Plato, *Theages*.

[2] See Plutarch, *Why divine justice sometimes postpones the punishment of evil deeds*.

[3] See *Ibid.*

[4] See the *Republic*, books III, IV, and VII.

your family to many ages,—I desire to tell you of one single idea of mine regarding this, which is contrary to the common wont; it is all that I can offer for your service in this matter.

The office of the tutor whom you will give him — upon the choice of whom the whole result of his education depends — has many other important duties; but I do not touch on those, because I am unable to contribute there any thing of value; and upon this one point, about which I take upon myself to give him advice, he will believe me so far as he shall see reason so to do. For a child of good family, who seeks letters and learning, not for profit (for so base an object is unworthy of the grace and favour of the Muses, and, too, it concerns and depends upon others), and not so much for external benefits as for those peculiar to himself, and to enrich and adorn himself inwardly,[1] being desirous to turn out a man of ability rather than a learned man, I should wish, moreover, that care should be taken to select a guide whose head is very sound rather than very full; and that, while both qualities should be required, good morals and understanding, rather than book-knowledge, should be the more so; and that he should carry himself in his office in a novel way. They [2] are always bawling into our ears as if pouring into a tunnel; and our business is simply to repeat what they tell us. I would have him amend this state of things, and that from the outset, according to the ability of the mind he has to deal with, he should begin to exercise it,[3] making it examine things, choose among them, and distinguish them by itself; sometimes breaking out the path for it, sometimes letting it break it out. I would not have him alone think and speak: I would have him listen while his pupil takes his turn at speaking. (*c*) Socrates and, after him, Arcesilaus, first made their pupils talk, and then talked to them.[4] *Obest plerumque iis qui discere volunt auctoritas eorum qui docent.*[5] It is well that he make him trot be-

[1] See Seneca, *Epistle* 74.

[2] That is, our teachers.

[3] *Il commençast à la mettre sur la montre.*

[4] See Cicero, *De Fin.*, II, 1.2.

[5] The authority of those who teach is very often a hindrance to those who wish to learn. — Idem, *De Nat. Deor.*, I, 5.

fore him, in order to judge of his paces, and to determine how far he must hold himself back to accommodate himself to his [1] powers. For lack of this proportion we mar all. And to learn how to attain it, and how to conduct oneself therein with due measure, is one of the most difficult tasks that I know; and it is a high and very strong character that knows how to stoop to his childish ways and to guide them. I walk more steadily and more sure-footedly up hill than down. Those who, as our custom is, undertake to direct several minds of such diverse measure and structure with the same lessons and similar rules of conduct — it is no wonder if, among a whole multitude of children, they find only two or three who produce any sound fruit from their teaching.

(*a*) [2] Let him not demand an account of the words of the lesson simply, but of its meaning and substance; and let him judge of the benefit that he [3] has derived, by the evidence, not of his memory, but of his life.[4] What he shall learn, make him look at it in a hundred aspects and apply it to as many different subjects, to see if he has fully apprehended it and made it his own, (*c*) taking guidance for his [5] progress from the pedagogic method of Plato. (*a*) It is evidence of indigestibleness and indigestion to throw up food as it has been swallowed: the stomach has not done its work if it has not changed the condition and character of what was given it to cook.

(*b*) [6] Our minds act only from belief in others, tied and constrained by liking for another's opinions, enslaved and imprisoned under the authority of their instruction. We have been so subjected to trammels that we can no longer move freely; our energy and independence are lost; (*c*) *nun-*

[1] That is, his pupil's.

[2] In the early editions, this sentence, immediately following that preceding the interpolation of the *Édition Municipale*, was separated from it by a semi-colon only.

[3] The pupil.

[4] In the early editions, *mais de son jugement.*

[5] The tutor's.

[6] The original addition of 1588 began with these sentences, which were stricken out in 1595: *On ne cherche reputation que de science. Quand ils disent: "C'est un homme sçavant," il leur semble tout dire.*

quam tutelæ suæ fiunt.[1] (*b*) I saw familiarly at Pisa an excellent man,[2] but such an Aristotelian that his strongest opinion [3] is that the touchstone and canon of all truth is conformity to the teachings of Aristotle; that outside of these there are nothing but chimeras and inanities; [4] that he saw every thing and said every thing. This position of his, because it was interpreted a little too broadly and maliciously, placed him in old times, and kept him for a long while, in great danger [5] from the Inquisition at Rome.

(*a*) Let him make him sift every thing,[6] and lodge nothing in his brain on authority merely and on trust; let not Aristotle's principles be his principles, any more than those of the Stoics or Epicureans; let this diversity of opinions be put before him: he will choose if he can; if not, he will remain in doubt. (*c*) None but a fool is sure and determined.[7]

(*a*) Che non men che saper dubbiar m'aggrada.[8]

For if he embraces the opinions of Xenophon and of Plato by his own judgement, they will no longer be their opinions, they will be his. (*c*) He who follows another, follows nothing, finds nothing, nay, seeks nothing.[9] *Non sumus sub rege; sibi quisque se vindicet.*[10] Let him at least know what he knows. (*a*) He must imbibe their ideas, not learn their pre-

[1] They never become their own masters. — Seneca, *Epistle* 33.

[2] *Un honneste homme.*

[3] *Dogme.* This word was introduced into the French language by Montaigne.

[4] *Inanité* also was first used by Montaigne.

[5] *Accessoire = malencontre.* Cf. Molière, *École des Femmes*, IV, 6:

Et tout ce qu'elle a pu, dans un tel accessoire,
C'est de me renfermer dans une grande armoire.

"*Ce dernier sens,*" says Littré, "*tombé en désuétude, est ancien.*"

[6] *Tout passer par l'estamine.*

[7] This last clause, inserted on the Bordeaux copy, then stricken out, then restored, was omitted in the edition of 1595.

[8] For doubt, not less than knowledge, pleases me. — Dante, *Inferno*, XI, 93. Taken by Montaigne from Guazzo's *Civil Conversation.* This verse first appeared in the second edition of the Essays (1582).

[9] See Seneca, *Epistle* 33.

[10] We are not subject to a king; let each man claim his rights. — *Ibid.*

cepts;[1] and let him boldly forget, if he will, whence he gets them, but let him learn to appropriate them to himself.[2] Every man may lay claim to truth and reason; they are no more his property who first uttered them than his who utters them later. (*c*) It is no more according to Plato than according to me, since he and I understand it and see it alike. (*a*) The bees pilfer from the flowers here and there,[3] but later of their booty they make honey, which is all their own; it is no longer thyme or marjoram. So with the parts borrowed from others: he will transform and blend them, to make from them a work all his own, namely, his judgement; his education, his labour, and study have no other aim than to fashion that.

(*c*) Let him conceal all that by which he has been helped, and show forth only what he has made of it.[4] Plunderers and borrowers exhibit their buildings and their purchases, not what they derive from others. You do not see the fees of a parliament man, you see the alliances he has gained, and honours for his children. No one makes a public accounting of his receipts, every one of his profits. The profit of our study is to have become better and wiser thereby. (*a*) It is the understanding which sees and hears, said Epicharmus; it is the understanding which turns every thing to profit, which makes use of every thing, which acts, which commands, and which reigns; all things else are blind and deaf and soulless.[5] Unquestionably we make it servile and cowardly when we do not leave it free to do aught of itself. Who ever asked his pupil what he thought (*b*) of the rhetoric and the grammar (*a*) of this or that sentence of Cicero? They fasten them tight to our memory,[6] like oracles, in which the letters and syllables are of the substance of the thing. (*c*) To know by heart is not to know: it is to possess what has been given into the keeping of one's memory. What we rightly know, we make use of without looking at the pat-

[1] See Seneca, *Epistle* 84.
[2] See Idem, *Epistle* 12.
[3] See Idem, *Epistle* 84; Plutarch, *On Hearing*.
[4] See Seneca, *Epistle* 84.
[5] See Plutarch, *Which animals are the more crafty*, etc.
[6] *On nous les placque en la memoire toutes empennées.*

tern, without turning our eyes toward the book.[1] A pitiful competence is a competence purely bookish! I look for it to serve as ornament, not as foundation, according to Plato's opinion, who said that firmness, trust, and sincerity were true philosophy; other kinds of knowledge, those which had a different aim, were but deceitful.

(*a*) I should like to have Paluel or Pompey, those fine dancers of my time, teach their capers just by seeing them performed without our moving from our seats, as these persons seek to instruct our understanding without jogging it; (*c*) or that we should be taught to manage a horse, or a pike, or a lute, or the voice, without practice, as these persons seek to teach us to think well and talk well, without practice in talking or thinking. (*a*) Now, in this study, all that presents itself to our eyes serves as a book to learn from: the mischief of a page, the stupidity of a servant, a remark at table, are so many new subjects.[2]

For this reason, intercourse with men is wonderfully proper for it,[3] and travel in foreign countries,[4] not simply to bring back, after the manner of our French nobility, the number of feet of the Santa Rotonda, or the elegance of Signora Livia's drawers; or, like others, how much longer or broader the face of Nero is in some old ruin, than it is on some equally old coin; but chiefly to bring back the characteristics of those nations and their manner of living, and to rub and file our wits against those of others. I would have him begin to be taken about in his tender years, and especially, to kill two birds with one stone, among the neighbouring nations whose languages are most unlike ours, to which the tongue can not be wonted unless you train it in good season. And also, it is an opinion accepted by every one that it is not well to bring up a child in the lap of his parents: their natural affection softens and relaxes them too much, even the wisest; they are capable neither of punishing his faults nor of allowing him to be nurtured roughly,

[1] See Seneca, *Epistle* 33.

[2] Cf. Plutarch, *How we should read the poets*.

[3] That is, for education.

[4] It had already become a customary thing for the nobility to travel to broaden their knowledge.

as he should be, and at haphazard; they could not endure his returning sweating and dusty from his exercises, (*c*) taking hot or cold drinks,[1] (*a*) or to see him on a restive horse, or facing a skilful fencer, foil in hand, or his first arquebus. But there is no escape: he who would make of him a man of worth must doubtless not spare him in those early years, and must often run counter to the rules of medicine.

(*b*) Vitamque sub dio et trepidis agat
In rebus.[2]

(*c*) It is not enough to strengthen his mind — we must strengthen his muscles also. The mind is too hard pressed if it be not supported,[3] and has too much to do to discharge alone two functions. I know how mine labours [4] in company with so tender, so sensitive a body, which lets itself so greatly depend upon it; and I often observe in my reading that my masters, in their writings, pass off as due to magnanimity and high spirit, examples which usually belong more to thickness of skin and hardness of bone. I have seen men, women, and children of such nature that a flogging is less to them than a fillip to me; who neither cry out nor scowl under the blows that are given to them. When athletes are like philosophers in patience, it is strength of nerve rather than of mind. Now, accustomedness to labour is accustomedness to pain: *labor callum obducit dolori*.[5] He must be practised in the discomfort and severity of action, to train him for the discomfort and severity of dislocation, of the colic, of the cautery, and of prison, and of torture. For even he may fall into the clutches of these last, which, according to the times, seize upon good men as well as bad. We are experiencing this. He who rebels against the laws renders the best men liable to whippings and the rope.

(*a*) And then,[6] too, the authority of the tutor over him,[7]

[1] *Boire chaut, boire froit.*

[2] Let him live under the open sky and amid dangers. — Horace, *Odes*, III, 2.5.

[3] That is, supported by the body.

[4] *Ahane = éprouve une grande fatigue en faisant quelque chose.*

[5] Labor leads to insensibility to pain. — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, II, 15.

[6] He now recurs to the discussion of the evils of children being tied to their parents.

[7] That is, over the pupil.

which should be sovereign, is interrupted and hindered by the presence of the parents. Besides which, the respect that the household pays to him,[1] the knowledge of the wealth and grandeur of his race, are in my opinion no slight disadvantages at that age. In this school of intercourse with men, I have often observed this defect, that, instead of acquiring knowledge from others, we strive only to give it of ourselves, and are more desirous to dispose of our wares than to acquire new ones. Silence and modesty are very needful qualities in social relations. This child will be trained to be saving and thrifty with his store of knowledge when he shall have acquired it, and not to take exception to the follies and falsehoods that are uttered in his presence; for it is a discourteous unmannerliness to do battle with every thing that is not to our liking. (*c*) Let him be content with correcting himself, and not seem to reprove in others all that he refuses to do, or to oppose public morals: *licet sapere sine pompa, sine invidia;*[2] let him shun such discourteous conceits and the puerile ambition of desiring to appear more subtle by being different; and — as if reprehension and innovations were difficult matters — to seek to derive reputation of some special worth from them. As it befits only great poets to employ the licenses of the art, so it is tolerable only for great and illustrious minds to claim privileges above what is customary. *Si quid Socrates et Aristippus contra morem consuetudinem fecerint . . . idem sibi ne arbitretur licere; magnis enim illi et divinis bonis hanc licentiam assequebantur.*[3] (*a*) He is to be taught not to enter into discussion or disputation except with a champion worthy of his steel, and even then not to employ all the methods that may be of service to him, but only those that will be most effective. Let him be trained to be nice in the selection and sifting out of his arguments, loving pertinency and, consequently, brevity. Let him be taught above all to surrender and lay down his arms

[1] That is, the pupil.

[2] Let him be wise without display and without ill-will. — Seneca, *Epistle* 103.

[3] Because a Socrates and an Aristippus did something contrary to general usage and custom, let him not suppose that he has a similar license; for they acquired it by great and superhuman virtues. — Cicero, *De Off.*, I, 41.

to the truth,[1] just as soon as he discovers it, whether it be born in the hands of his opponent, or in himself on second thought. For he is not to be put in a high place of instruction,[2] to repeat a prescribed lesson. He is pledged to no cause save by the fact that he approves it; nor is to belong to the confraternity in which freedom to repent and reconsider is sold for ready money. (*c*) *Neque, ut omnia quæ præscripta et imperata sint defendat, necessitate ulla cogitur.*[3]

If his tutor be of my mind, he will train his will to be a most loyal and devoted and fearless servant of his prince; but he will blow cold upon the desire to attach himself to the prince otherwise than by a public service. Besides many other disadvantages which impair our liberty by these private obligations, the judgement of a man who is pledged and bought is either less sound and less free, or is marred by prudence and ingratitude. A courtier can have neither the right nor the desire to speak or think otherwise than favourably of a master who has chosen him from the many thousands of his subjects to foster and advance with his own hand. Such favour and benefit not unreasonably impair his freedom and bedazzle him. Wherefore we ordinarily find these persons[4] talking in a different tone from everybody else in a state, and that they are untrustworthy in such matters.[5] (*a*) Let his conscience and his virtue shine forth even in his speech, (*c*) and have only reason for their guide. (*a*) Let him be made to understand that to avow the flaw that he finds in his own argument, although it be perceived only by himself, is an act of good judgement and sincerity, which are the qualities that he chiefly seeks; (*c*) that obstinacy and pugnacity are vulgar conditions, seen oftenest in the meanest minds; that to reconsider and correct oneself, to abandon an ill-advised course at the height of one's ardour, are rare and strong and philosophical qualities.

[1] Cf. Book III, chap. 8: *Je festoye et caresse la verité en quelque main je le trouve, et m'y rends alaigrement, et luy tends mes armes vaincus de loing que je la vois approcher.*

[2] *En chaise.*

[3] Nor is he obliged by any necessity to defend all that is prescribed and enjoined. — Cicero, *Academica*, II, 3.

[4] That is, the courtiers.

[5] That is, in relation to the character of their master.

(*a*) He must be warned, when he is in company, to keep his eyes open in all directions; for I find that the highest positions are usually taken possession of by the least capable men, and that greatness of fortune is seldom combined with ability. I have seen, while, at the upper end of the table, they were discussing the beauty of a tapestry or the flavour of the malvoisie, many fine sayings wasted at the other end. He must prove the range of every man: a herdsman, a mason, a wayfarer — he must put them all under contribution, and borrow from each according to his wares, for every thing is of some use in a household; even the folly and weakness of other men will be instructive to him.[1] By observing the graces and manners of each individual, there will be born a longing for good, and contempt for bad, manners. Let his imagination be moved by a decent curiosity to inquire into every thing; he should see every thing that may be about him that is out of the ordinary: a building, a fountain, a man, the site of an old-time battle, a place where Cæsar passed, or Charlemagne.

(*b*) Quæ tellus sit lenta gelu, quæ putris ab æstu;
Ventus in Italiam quis bene vela ferat.[2]

(*a*) Let him investigate the morals, the resources, and the alliances of this prince and of that. These are things very interesting to learn, and very useful to know.

In this study of man I mean to include, and chiefly, those who live only in the memory of books. Let him study by means of histories those great minds of the best ages. It is a profitless study if you will;[3] also, if you will, it is a study of inestimable value, (*c*) and the only study, as Plato says, which the Lacedæmonians for their part considered worth while.[4] (*a*) What shall he not gain in this direction by

[1] Cf. Book III, chap. 8: *Tous les jours la sotte contenance d'un autre m'advertit et m'advise.*

[2] What land is benumbed with cold, what land is crumbling with heat, what fair wind drives the sails toward Italy. — Propertius, IV, 3.39.

[3] *C'est un vain estude, qui veut;* in the editions prior to 1588, there was no punctuation after *veut*, which was followed by this clause, *et qui ne se propose autre fin que le plaisir.*

[4] See the *Hippias Major*, at the beginning.

reading the Lives of our Plutarch! But let my guide remember the object of his office, and let him impress upon his pupil not so much (*c*) the date of the fall of Carthage as the qualities of Hannibal and Scipio, or not so much (*a*) where Marcellus died as why it was inconsistent with his duty that he died there. Let him not be taught chronicles so much as taught to pass judgement on them. (*c*) It is, to my mind, of all subjects that to which our minds apply themselves in the most widely variable measure. I have read in Livy a hundred things that another has not read there. Plutarch read there a hundred things over and above what I have been able to read, and perchance over and above what the author put there. To some it is a pure grammatical study; to others, the anatomy of philosophy, whereby the most obscure parts of our nature are searched. (*a*) There are in Plutarch many lengthy reflections, most worthy to be known; for he is, in my opinion, the master craftsman in such work; but there are a thousand others which he has barely touched; he merely indicates with his finger the way we can go, if we please, and contents himself sometimes with giving only a hint at the heart of a subject. We must draw these[1] forth, and place them in full view;[2] (*b*) as that remark of his, that the people of Asia were subject to one man because they did not know how to pronounce one syllable, which was "No,"[3] furnished La Boëtie, it may be, with the substance and the suggestion of his *Servitude Volontaire*. (*a*) Even to see him cull out a trivial act in a man's life, or a remark which seems not of importance, is a dissertation. It is a pity that men of intelligence are so fond of brevity: doubtless their reputation is the better for it, but we are the worse off. Plutarch prefers that we should praise him for his judgement rather than for his learning; he prefers to leave us with an appetite for him rather than satiated. He knew that even on worth-while subjects too much can be said, and that Alexandridas justly reproved him who made an excellent speech, but too long a one, to the Ephors: "O stranger; you say what is meet, but in unmeet fashion."[4] (*c*) They who have slender bodies

[1] That is "the lengthy reflections." [2] *Mettre en place marchande.*
[3] Plutarch, *Of False Shame*. He quotes this as a joke.
[4] See Idem, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians*.

stuff them out with padding; they who have slender substance, inflate it with words.

(*a*) There results a wonderful enlightenment of the human judgement from frequentation with mankind. We are all confined and packed close within ourselves, and our sight is contracted to the length of our nose. Some one asked Socrates of what place he was. He did not reply, "Of Athens," but, "Of the world."[1] He, whose imagination was fuller and more widely extended, embraced the universe as his native place, cast his knowledge, his society, and his affections to all mankind — not like us, who look only beneath us. When the vines freeze in my village, my priest argues therefrom the wrath of God against the human race, and concludes that the pip already has the cannibals in its clutches. Looking upon our civil wars, who does not exclaim that this machine is overturned and that the day of judgement has us by the collar, not reflecting that many worse things have been seen, and that ten thousand parts of the world do not cease to make merry.[2] (*b*) For my part, considering the license and impunity that attends them, I marvel to see them so mild and gentle. (*a*) To a man in a hailstorm the whole hemisphere seems to be under a raging tempest. And the Savoyard said that if that fool of a king had known how to manage his fortune, he[3] might have been his duke's majordomo: his imagination could conceive no more exalted grandeur than his master's.[4] (*c*) We all are unconsciously subject to this error — an error with important and prejudicial results. (*a*) But he who sets before himself as in a picture this noble figure of our mother Nature in her full majesty; who reads in her aspect a so universal and constant variety; who perceives himself therein, and not himself alone but a whole realm, as the smallest possible speck — he alone esteems things according to their real proportions. This great world, which some persons multiply further as species under one genus, is the mirror in which we must look at ourselves in order that we may know ourselves from the right

[1] See Plutarch, *Of Banishment;* Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, V, 37.
[2] *Ne laissent pas de galler le bon temps.*
[3] That is, the Savoyard.
[4] Cf. Henri Estienne, *Apologie pour Hérodote* (*discours préliminaire*).

point of view. In short, I would have it my scholar's book. Such a multitude of humours, of sects, of judgements, of opinions, of laws, and of customs teaches us to judge wisely of our own, and teaches our judgement to recognise its imperfection and its natural weakness; which is no slight training. So many civil commotions and changes of public fortune teach us to make no great miracle of our own fortune. So many names, so many victories and conquests buried in oblivion make it ridiculous to hope to perpetuate our names by the capture of ten insignificant troopers and an unimportant little fortress that is known only by its fall. The proud pomp of so many foreign nations, the swollen majesty of so many courts and stately mansions, steadies us and permits our sight to endure the brilliancy of our own without blinking. So many millions of men interred before ourselves encourage us not to fear going to join such good company in the other world. And so with the rest.

(*c*) Our life, said Pythagoras,[1] resembles the vast and populous assemblage of the Olympic games. Some exercise the body to acquire glory in games; others carry merchandise thither to sell for profit. There are those (and they are not the worst) who seek there no other advantage than to observe how and why each thing is effected, and to be spectators of the life of other men, in order to judge of it, and to regulate their own life. (*a*) To examples can properly be joined all the most profitable teachings of philosophy, by which human actions should be tested as their canon. You will tell him, —

> (*b*) quid fas optare, quid asper
> Utile nummus habet; patriæ charisque propinquis
> Quantum elargiri deceat; quem te Deus esse
> Jussit, et humana qua parte locatus es in re;
> Quid sumus, aut quidnam victuri gignimur, [2] —

(*a*) what it is to know and not to know what should be the

[1] See Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, V, 3.

[2] What it is right to desire; what usefulness has newly coined money; how much it is fitting to bestow on thy country and on dear kindred; what sort of man God has commanded thee to be, and what is your post in the human commonwealth; what we are, and what the life we are born to lead. — Persius, *Satires*, III, 69–72, 67.

object of his study; what courage is, and temperance, and justice; what the difference is between ambition and cupidity, slavery and submission, license and liberty; by what signs genuine and solid contentment may be known; to what extent we should fear death, pain, and shame, —

(*b*) Et quo quemque modo fugiatque feratque laborem;[1] —

(*a*) what springs move us, and the occasion of so many different stirrings within us. For it seems to me that the first teachings in which the intelligence should be steeped should be those which may regulate his morals and his mind, and which will teach him to understand himself and to know how to die well and to live well.

(*c*) Among the liberal arts, let us begin with the art that liberates us.[2] They all help somewhat in the instruction of our life and in its employment, as all other things help somewhat. But let us choose that one which helps directly and professedly. If we could confine the appurtenances of our lives within their due and natural limits, we should find that the greater number of the branches of knowledge that are in use are outside of our use, and that even in those which are [adapted to our use][3] there are breadths and depths which we should do well to let alone, and, following the teaching of Socrates,[4] limit our course of study in those branches where usefulness is lacking.

(*a*) Sapere aude,
Incipe; vivendi recte qui prorogat horam,
Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis; at ille
Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.[5]

[1] And how he may avoid or endure every kind of hardship. — Virgil, *Æneid*, III, 459.

[2] *Entre les ars liberaux, commençons par l'art qui nous faict libres.* I have tried, at some sacrifice, to reproduce the play upon the words *liberaux* and *libres*. This whole passage is a paraphrase of part of Seneca, *Epistle* 88.

[3] *En celles mesmes qui le sont.* A very curious construction.

[4] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Socrates;* Plato, *Euthydemus*.

[5] Dare to be wise; set about it; the man who delays the hour of living rightly is like the rustic who waits for the river to pass away; but it flows on, and forever will it flow. — Horace, *Epistles*, I, 2.40.

It is great folly to teach our children

(*b*) Quid moveant Pisces, animosaque signa Leonis,
Lotus et Hesperia quid Capricornus aqua,[1]

the science of the stars, and (*a*) the movement of the eighth sphere, before their own.

Τί πλειάδεσσι κάμοι
Τί δ' ἀστράσι βοώτεω;[2]

(*c*) Anaximenes wrote to Pythagoras: "How can I meditate on the secrets of the stars, having death or slavery always before my eyes?"[3] (For at that time the kings of Persia were preparing to war against his country.) So every one might say: "Being beset by ambition, avarice, temerity, and superstition, and having so many other enemies of life within me, shall I attempt to think about the movement of the world?"

(*a*) After he has been taught what helps to make him wiser and better, then let his tutor enlighten him as to what logic is, and physics,[4] and geometry, and rhetoric; and the branch of learning that he shall choose when his judgement is formed, he will very soon master. Let his lesson be given sometimes by talk, sometimes by books; sometimes his tutor will supply him with the very author suitable for that part of his instruction; sometimes he will give him the marrow and substance of the book all prepared. And if he be not himself sufficiently familiar with books to find in them the many admirable passages they contain fit for his purpose, some man of letters can be joined with him, who, whenever there is need, can supply him with such provisions as he may require, to deal out and dispense to his nursling. And who can doubt that this method of instruction is easier and more natural than that of Gaza?[5] In that are thorny

[1] What is the influence of Pisces, and of the constellation of bold Leo, and Capricornus bathed in the Hesperian Sea. — Propertius, IV, 1.89.

[2] What do the Pleiades matter to me, or the stars of Boötes? — Anacreon, XVII, 10.

[3] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Anaximenes*.

[4] The earlier editions, including 1588, have *musique*.

[5] Theodorus Gaza (1398–1478), a Greek scholar, was the author of a Greek grammar, and translator of Aristotle.

and disagreeable precepts and idle and bloodless words, in which there is nothing to catch hold of, nothing that awakens the mind.[1] In this other method the mind finds a place to browse and to pasture on. This fruit is incomparably greater, and yet it will be sooner ripe.

It is a remarkable fact that things have come to such a pass in our time that philosophy is, even to persons of intelligence, a vain and chimerical thing, of no use and no value, (*c*) both in appearance and in reality. (*a*) I think that these quibblings [2] which have blocked the approach to her [3] are the cause. It is a great mistake to describe her as inaccessible to children and of a lowering and frowning and terrifying aspect. Who has disguised her with that wan and hideous mask? There is nothing gayer, more jocund, more blithe, and, I might almost say, sportive. She exhorts always to holidaying and merry-making; a sad and spiritless air shows that not there is her abode. Demetrius the grammarian, finding a party of philosophers sitting together in the temple at Delphi, said to them: "Unless I am mistaken, seeing you so placid and gay in deportment, there is not very serious talk among you." To which one of them, Heracleon the Megarian, replied: "It is for them who seek to learn whether the future tense of βάλλω has the double λ, or who seek the derivation of the comparatives χεῖρον and βέλτιον, and of the superlatives χεῖριστον and βέλτιστον, to knit the brows while talking of their kind of knowledge; but, as for the discussions of philosophy, they are accustomed to enliven and exhilarate those who engage in them, and not to depress and sadden them." [4]

(*b*) Deprendas animi tormenta latentis in ægro
Corpore, deprendas et gaudia: sumit utrumque
Inde habitum facies.[5]

(*a*) The mind that harbours philosophy should by virtue of

[1] The earlier editions, including 1588, add: *rien qui vous chatouille.*
[2] *Ergotismes.*
[3] That is, to philosophy.
[4] See Plutarch, *Of oracles that have ceased to speak.*
[5] You may detect, hidden in a suffering body, mental pain, and likewise you may detect gladness; from both the face assumes an expression. — Juvenal, *Satires*, IX, 18.

its soundness render sound the body likewise; it should make its tranquillity and gladness shine forth; should shape the outward bearing in its mould, and therefore arm it with a gracious pride, with an active and sprightly behaviour, and with a satisfied and courteous demeanour. (*c*) The most express mark of wisdom is a constant gladness; [1] its state is like that of things beyond the moon — always serene. (*a*) It is "Baroco" and "Baralipton" that make their adherents so dirty and smoke-begrimed, it is not she; they know her only by hearsay. What! it is her part to still the tempests of the soul and to teach hunger and fever to laugh, not by a few imaginary epicycles, but by natural and palpable arguments. (*c*) Her purpose is virtue, which is not, as schoolmen say, established at the top of a steep, rugged, and inaccessible mountain.[2] They who have approached her have, on the contrary, found her dwelling in a lovely plain, fertile and flower-strewn, whence she can see clearly beneath her all things; but yet one who knows the way can reach the place by shady, grassy, and sweetly blooming paths, pleasantly, and by an easy and smooth slope, like that of the heavenly vault. Those who have not frequented this sovereign Virtue, beautiful, triumphant, full of love, equally delicate and courageous, the professed and irreconcilable foe of bitterness and trouble and fear and constraint, who has Nature for her guide, and Good Fortune and Pleasure for her companions, have imagined according to their weakness this absurd, gloomy, contentious, grim, menacing, scornful image, and have placed it on a lonely rock amid brambles: a phantom to frighten folk.

My tutor, who knows that he ought to fill his pupil's heart with affection, as much as or more than with reverence for virtue, will not fail to tell him that the poets follow the common opinions, and to make him clearly to know [3] that the gods have placed toil in the approaches to the closets of Venus rather than to those of Pallas. And when he shall begin to be conscious of himself, putting before him, as a mistress to enjoy, Bradamante or Angelica,[4] and a natural, vigorous, noble beauty, not mannish but virile, in contrast

[1] See Seneca, *Epistle* 59.16.
[2] See Idem, *De Ira*, III, 13.
[3] *Lui faire toucher au doigt.*
[4] Heroines of the *Orlando Furioso*.

to a soft, delicate, and artificial beauty, — the one attired as a boy, on her head a glittering helmet; the other dressed as a girl, on her head a tire trimmed with pearls,—he will judge his very love to be manly if he should choose quite differently from that effeminate Phrygian shepherd. He will teach him this new lesson, that the worth and eminence of true virtue lies in the ease and profit and pleasure of her employment, which is so far from being difficult that children can practise it as well as men, the simple as the crafty. Regulation, not force, is her instrument. Socrates, her prime favourite, intentionally lays aside his strength to slip into the naturalness and ease of her progression. She is the foster-mother of human joys. By making them honest, she makes them certain and pure; by moderating them, she keeps them in breath and in appetite; by cutting out those that she refuses us, she makes us the keener for those that she leaves us, and she leaves us in abundance all those that Nature approves, even to satiety, like a mother, if not to lassitude; unless perchance we choose to say that the authority which stops the toper before drunkenness, the glutton before indigestion, the lecher before baldness, is a foe to our pleasures. If ordinary fortune plays her false,[1] she escapes its blows, or does without it and makes for herself another all her own, no longer wavering and unsteady. She knows how to be rich and powerful and learned, and to sleep in perfumed beds; she loves life, she loves beauty, glory, and health. But her proper and especial function is to know how to make a disciplined use of these good things, and to know how to lose them unmoved: a function much more noble than grievous, without which the whole course of life is perverted, turbulent, and disfigured, and one may fairly attribute to it those rocks and bramble-bushes, and those monsters.[2] If the pupil proves to be of such a wayward humour that he prefers to listen to a fabulous story rather than to the narrative of an interesting journey or to a wise saying when he hears it; if, at the sound of the tabour that awakens the youthful ardour of his comrades, he turns aside to another note that invites him to the sports of the

[1] *Luy faut.*

[2] Referring to the image of virtue on a lonely rock, page 216.

jugglers; if in his heart he finds it no pleasanter and sweeter to return dusty and victorious from a wrestling-match, with the prize of that sport, than from the tennis court or from a ball, then I can see no other remedy than that [in good season his tutor strangle him, if he be without witnesses, or that] [1] he be set up as a pastry-cook in some big city, were he a duke's son, according to the counsel of Plato, that children should be disposed of,[2] not according to their father's abilities, but according to the abilities of their minds.

(*a*) Since it is philosophy that teaches us to live, and childhood, like other ages, has its lessons to learn from her, why not make her known to childhood?

(*b*) Udum et molle lutum est; nunc, nunc properandus,
et acri
Fingendus sine fine rota.[3]

(*a*) They teach us to live when life is past. A hundred students have caught the pox before they came to the reading of Aristotle "On Temperance." (*c*) Cicero said that, were he to live the lives of two men, he would not take the time to study the lyric poets; [4] and I consider these cavilling quibblers [5] even more deplorably futile. Our boy must be in far greater haste: he owes to study only the first fifteen or sixteen years of his life; the rest he owes to action. The time being so short, let us devote it to necessary instruction. (*a*) This is waste.[6] Cut out all these thorny subtleties of dialectic — by which our life can not be bettered; take the simple arguments of philosophy, learn how to select them and to discuss them pertinently; they are easier to understand than a tale of Boccaccio; a child just weaned is more capable of it than of learning to read or write. Philosophy has teachings for men at their birth as well as in their decrep-

[1] The clause in brackets omitted in 1595.

[2] *Qu'il faut colloquer les enfans.* See Plato, *Republic;* Jowett, (American edition), vol. iii, p. 104.

[3] The clay is moist and soft; now, now quickly fashion it with speed on the revolving wheel. — Persius, *Satires*, III, 23.

[4] See Seneca, *Epistle* 49.5.

[5] *Ces ergotistes.*

[6] *Ce sont abus;* literally, this is (*i. e.*, our methods are) misspending.

itude. I am of Plutarch's opinion, that Aristotle did not so much occupy the time of his famous pupil in the skill of constructing syllogisms, or in the principles of geometry, as in teaching him wise precepts concerning valour, prowess, nobleness of character, and temperance, and the courage to fear nothing; and with this preparation he sent him forth, when still a child, to subjugate the empiry of the world with only 30,000 foot-soldiers, 4000 horse, and 42,000 crowns.[1] The other arts and branches of knowledge,[2] he says, Alexander held in high esteem, and praised their excellence and charm; but, as for himself taking pleasure in them, it was not easy to surprise him in the desire to practise them.

(*b*) Petite hinc, juvenesque, senesque,
Finem animo certum, miserisque viatica canis.[3]

(*c*) It is as Epicurus said at the beginning of his letter to Meniceus: "Let not the youngest shun philosophy, nor the oldest weary of it. He who does otherwise seems to say either that it is not yet the time to live happily, or that it is no longer the time."[4]

(*a*) For all that, I would not have the boy confined.[5] I would not have him given over to the brooding melancholy of a passionate schoolmaster. I would not spoil his mind by keeping it in torture and at work, as others do, fourteen or fifteen hours a day, like a porter. (*c*) Nor should I think it well, if, from an unsocial and pensive disposition, he were addicted to an unwise application to the study of books,[6] that he should be encouraged therein; it unfits boys for social intercourse and diverts them from better occupations.

[1] Alexander. See Plutarch, *Of the fortune of Alexander.*

[2] *Arts et sciences.*

[3] Take from this, young men and old, a fixed purpose for your minds, and make provision for the wretchedness of hoary old age. — Persius, *Satires*, V, 64.

[4] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Epicurus.*

[5] In the earlier editions, *dans un college.*

[6] Cf. Book I, chap. 39, "Of Solitude," *infra*, page 325. *Les livres sont plaisans; mais si de leur frequentation nous en perdons en fin la gayeté et la santé, nos meilleures pieces, quittons les: je suis de ceux qui pensent que leur fruict ne pouvoit contrepeser cette perte.*

And how many men have I seen in my time, stultified by a reckless greediness of learning! Carneades was so besotted with it that he had no time to attend to his hair and his nails.[1] (*a*) Nor would I have his good manners spoilt by others' clownishness and rudeness. French discretion was long ago proverbial as a discretion which took root early but had little hold. In truth, we still see that there is nothing so charming as the young French children; but commonly they disappoint the hopes conceived of them, and as grown men, no excellence is seen in them. I have heard it maintained by men of understanding that it is these schools to which they are sent, of which there are so many, that brutify them thus.

To our pupil, a closet, a garden, table and bed, solitude, company, morning and evening — all hours will be alike to him, every place his study: for philosophy, which, as the moulder of opinions and manners, will be his principal lesson, has this privilege of entering into every thing. Isocrates the orator being urged at a banquet to talk about his art, every one thought he was right in replying: "It is not the time now for what I can do; and I can not do that for which it is now the time." [2] For to offer harangues or rhetorical discussions to a company assembled for merry-making and feasting would be too discordant a combination; and one might say as much of all the other kinds of learning. But, as for philosophy, in those parts where she treats of man, and of his duties and functions, it has been the universal opinion of all wise men that the charm of her conversation is such that she should not be denied admission to either banquets or games; and Plato, having bidden her to his Banquet,[3] we see how she discourses to the company in a pleasant fashion, adapted to the time and place, although it is one of his loftiest and most salutary treatises.

> Æque pauperibus prodest, locupletibus æque;
> Et, neglecta, æque pueris senibusque nocebit.[4]

[1] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Carneades*.

[2] See Plutarch, *Table-Talk*.

[3] See *Ibid*.

[4] It equally profits the poor and the rich; and, neglected, will be equally harmful to boys and old men. — Horace, *Epistles*, I, 1.25.

Thus, doubtless, he will have not so many holidays [1] as the others; but as the steps that we take in walking in a gallery tire us less, although there may be three times as many, than those we take on some highway, so our lessons, coming about as if by accident, without set obligation of time and place, and being mingled with all our acts, will flow on without making themselves felt. Even games and bodily exercises will be a part of his study: running, wrestling, (*c*) music, (*a*) dancing, hunting, the management of horses and the use of weapons. I would have his exterior agreeableness and social demeanour (*c*) and his personal bearing (*a*) shape themselves at the same time with his inner being. It is not a spirit, it is not a body that we are training: it is a man; we must not separate them.[2] And, as Plato says, we must not train one of them without the other, but drive them side by side, like a pair of horses fastened to the same pole.[3] (*c*) And, listening to him, does he not seem to allot more time and care to the exercises of the body, and to judge that the mind may be exercised at the same time, and not the opposite? [4] (*a*) Meanwhile, this instruction should be carried on with grave gentleness, not as it is. Instead of inviting children to study, they bring them, in truth, nothing but fear and cruelty. Away with violence and compulsion; there is nothing, in my opinion, which so debases and stupefies a well-born nature. If you wish him to fear disgrace and punishment, do not harden him to them; harden him to sweat and cold, to the wind, to the sun, and to the chances which he ought to despise; take from him all sensitiveness and fastidiousness about his clothing and his bed, about eating and drinking; accustom him to every thing; let him not be a pretty boy and effeminate, but sturdy and vigorous. (*c*) In youth, in middle age, and in old age, I have always believed and thought this. But, among other things, this method of government of the greater part of our schools has always offended me. Failure would perchance be less harmful in the direction of indulgence. They are veritable prisons

[1] *Il chomera moins.*
[2] *Il n'en faut pas faire à deux.*
[3] See Plutarch, *Of the preservation of health.*
[4] See Plato, *Laws*, book VII.

of captive youth, whom they render disorderly by punishment beforehand. Go to one of them when the lessons are in progress: you hear nothing but outcries of children being punished and of masters drunk with anger. What a way of awakening an appetite for their lesson in those young and timid souls, to conduct them to it with a terrifying air and hands armed with whips! A wicked and pernicious fashion. It may be added, what Quintilian has very well observed, that such imperious authority leads to dangerous results, and especially our method of chastisement.[1] How much more seemly would it be if their classrooms were strewn with flowers and leaves rather than with bits of blood-stained switches! I would have joy and gladness pictured there, and Flora and the Graces, as the philosopher Speusippus had in his school.[2] Where their profit is, there let their pleasure be also. We should sweeten the food that is healthy for the child, and make bitter what is harmful to him. It is a marvel how solicitous Plato shows himself in his Laws, regarding the gaiety and pastimes of the youth of his city, and how he dwells upon their races, games, songs, jumpings, and dances, of which he says that the ancients attributed their ordering and patronage to the gods themselves—Apollo and the Muses and Minerva. He branches out in innumerable rules for his gymnasia; as for letters, he occupies himself very little with them, and seems especially to commend poetry only for music.[3]

(*a*) All eccentricity and peculiarity in our manners and conditions is to be avoided as a foe to intercourse and companionship with others, (*c*) and as unnatural. Who would not be astonished at the constitution of Demophon, Alexander's major-domo, who sweated in the dark and shivered in sunshine?[4] (*a*) I have seen those who fled from the odour of apples more than from a volley of musketry, others frightened at a mouse, others sickened by the sight of cream, others by seeing a feather-bed shaken up; and Germanicus could

[1] See Quintilian, *De Inst. Orat.*, I, 3.
[2] Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Speusippus.*
[3] See Plato, *Laws*, book VII, *passim.*
[4] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Pyrrho.*

not endure either the sight or the crowing of cocks.[1] There may perchance be some hidden property in this; but it could be got rid of, I think, if taken in good season. Training has accomplished this much with me,— not, to be sure, without some difficulty, — that, except beer, my stomach can accommodate itself indifferently to whatever is taken into it. While the body is still supple, we ought then to shape it to all fashions and customs; and, provided that a young man's desires and will can be held in check, let us boldly make him suited to all nations and all companionships, even to immoderateness and to excesses, if need be. (*c*) Let his practice follow custom. (*a*) Let him be able to do every thing, but enjoy doing only the best things. Even philosophers do not deem it praiseworthy in Callisthenes to have lost the favour of Alexander the Great, his master, by refusing to equal him in drinking.[2] Let him laugh and frolic and carouse with his prince; even in his debauches I would have him surpass his companions in vigour and persistency, and fail to do evil from lack neither of strength nor of knowledge, but from lack of inclination. (*c*) *Multum interest utrum peccare aliquis nolit aut nesciat.*[3] (*a*) I thought to do honour to a nobleman as far removed from such excesses as any man in France by asking him, in good company, how many times in his life he had got drunk in the interest of the king's affairs in Germany. He took it in that sense, and answered that it had happened three times, which he narrated. I know those who, lacking this faculty, have found themselves in sore straits, having to deal with that nation. I have often considered with great admiration the wonderful nature of Alcibiades, shaping himself so readily to customs so diverse, without injury to his health; sometimes surpassing the Persian sumptuousness and pomp, sometimes the Lacedæmonian austerity and frugality — being as much of an ascetic in Sparta as of a voluptuary in Ionia.[4]

[1] See Plutarch, *Of Envy and Hatred.*

[2] See Idem, *Life of Alexander.*

[3] It makes a great difference whether a man does not wish to sin, or does not know how. — Seneca, *Epistle* 90.

[4] See Plutarch, *Life of Alcibiades.*

Omnis Aristippum decuit color, et status, et res.[1]

Such a man I would train my pupil to be.

Quem duplici panno patientia velat
Mirabor, vitæ via si conversa decebit,
Personamque feret non inconcinnus utramque.[2]

These are my precepts. (*c*) He who practises them has profited more by them than he who simply knows them. If you see him, you hear him; if you hear him, you see him. Now, God forbid, says some one in Plato, that to philosophise is to learn many things and to discuss the arts![3] *Hanc amplissimam omnium artium bene vivendi disciplinam vita magis quam litteris persequuti sunt.*[4] Leo, prince of the Phalasians, inquiring of Heraclides Ponticus what science, what art he professed, "I know nothing," he said, "of either art or science, but I am a philosopher."[5] Some one reproved Diogenes because, being ignorant, he dealt with philosophy.[6] "I deal with it all the more fitly," he said. Hegesias begged him to read some book[7] to him. "You are queer," he replied; "you select real natural figs, not painted ones; why do you not select also natural and real things for the enrichment of the mind?"[8] Let him not so much say his lesson as do it; let him repeat it in his acts. (*a*) We shall see if there be prudence in his undertakings, if there be sincerity and

[1] Every condition, every situation, every circumstance befitted Aristippus. — Horace, *Epistles*, I, 17.23.

[2] He who patiently wraps himself in a patched garment will win my admiration if his new manner of life becomes him and he plays both parts without awkwardness. — *Ibid.*, 17.25, 26, 29. By taking words in a forced sense, and by omitting two lines, Montaigne thus adapts to his context a passage which Horace intended to be taken in just the opposite sense.

[3] See Plato, *The Rivals*.

[4] This instruction in right living, the most liberal of all arts, they have sought more in life than in letters. — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, IV, 3.

[5] See *Ibid.*, V, 3. At this point, Montaigne first wrote, then erased, the following on the Bordeaux copy of 1588: *Suivant le dogme de Antisthene maintenant que la vertu n'avoit besoin ny des disciplines ny des paroles ny des effaicts, qu'elle suffisoit à soi Hegesias.*

[6] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Diogenes*.

[7] That is, something written by Diogenes.

[8] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Diogenes*.

uprightness in his conduct, (*c*) if there be good judgement and grace in his speech, courage in his sicknesses, modesty in his sports, temperance in his pleasures, (*a*) indifference in his appetite, — whether it be flesh, fish, wine, or water, — (*c*) good order in his expenditure. *Qui disciplinam suam, non ostentationem scientiæ, sed legem vitæ putet; quique obtemperet ipse sibi, et decretis pareat.*[1] The true mirror of our thought [2] is the course of our lives.

(*a*) Zeuxidamus replied, to one who asked him why the Lacedæmonians did not reduce to writing the rules of valour and give them to their young men to read, that it was because they wished to accustom them to deeds, not to words.[3] Compare with such a one, after fifteen or sixteen years, one of those Latin-taught schoolboys, who will have spent as much time in simply learning to talk. The world is naught but chatter, and I never saw a man who did not talk rather more than less than he ought; and yet half of our lives is wasted over this. They keep us four or five years learning words and stringing them in sentences; as many more in shaping with them a great body divided in due proportion into four or five parts; and at least five more in learning to mingle and intertwine them concisely in some ingenious fashion. Let us leave this to those who make it their special business.

Going one day to Orleans, I met, in the open country this side of Clery, on their way to Bordeaux, two teachers,[4] about fifty paces one from the other. Farther on behind them, I came upon a troop of horsemen with their master at their head — the late monsieur le comte de la Rochefoucaut. One of my people asked the foremost of the teachers who the gentleman behind him was. He, not having observed the retinue that was following and thinking that his own companion was referred to, replied amusingly: "He's not a gentleman: he's a grammarian and I am a logician." Now

[1] Who regards his doctrine, not as a vain display of knowledge, but as a rule of life; who obeys himself and complies with his own precepts. — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, II, 4.

[2] *Nos discours.*

[3] See Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians.*

[4] *Regens.*

let us, who, on the other hand, are here seeking to fashion, not a grammarian or a logician, but a gentleman, leave them to waste their time; our concern is elsewhere. Let our pupil but be well supplied with things, and words will follow only too freely: he will draw them on, if they refuse to follow. I hear some people apologise for not being able to express themselves, and they have the air of having their heads full of fine things which, for lack of an eloquent tongue, can not be brought forth: 't is a delusion. Do you know how it is, in my opinion? They are shadows that fall upon their minds from some shapeless ideas which they can not disentangle and clarify inwardly, and consequently can not produce outwardly. They do not as yet understand themselves; and as you watch them a little, stammering on the point of giving birth, you conclude that their labour is not at the stage of delivery, but of conception, and that they are still simply nourishing this imperfect embryo. For my part, I maintain, (*c*) and Socrates prescribes, (*a*) that he who has in his mind a vivid and distinct idea should bring it forth, either in bergamesque, or by gestures if he be dumb.

Verbaque prævisam rem non invita sequentur.[1]

And as this one said no less poetically in his prose, *cum res animum occupavere, verba ambiunt.*[2] (*c*) And this other: *Ipsæ res verba rapiunt.*[3] (*a*) He knows not ablative, conjunctive, substantive, or grammar; neither does his servant, or a fishwoman of the Petit Pont; yet they will give you your fill of talk, and will perchance be as little embarrassed by the rules of their language as the best master of arts in France. He knows not rhetoric, nor how, by way of preface, to capture the gentle reader's good-will; nor does he care to know. In truth, all this fine painting is readily eclipsed by the brilliancy of a simple, artless truth; these refinements serve only to amuse the vulgar herd, who are incapable of swal-

[1] If the matter be clearly discerned, the words will follow unhesitatingly. — Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 311.

[2] When a matter occupies the mind, words offer themselves for your choice. — Seneca, *Controversiæ*, III (*Proœmium*).

[3] The subject itself seizes upon words. — Cicero, *De Fin.*, III, 5.

lowing solider and stronger food, as Afer shows very plainly in Tacitus.[1] The ambassadors from Samos had come to Cleomenes, King of Sparta, prepared with a fine and long speech, to incite him to war against the tyrant Polycrates. After he had heard them out, he replied: "As for your beginning and exordium, I no longer remember it; nor, consequently, the middle; and as for your conclusion, I do not desire to do any thing about it."[2] An excellent reply that, it seems to me, and haranguers well nonplussed. (*b*) And what of this other? The Athenians had to choose one of two architects to build a great edifice: the first, being more wily, presented himself with a fine prepared speech on the subject of this undertaking and won favour in popular judgement; but the other, in three words, "Athenians, what this man has said, I will do."[3]

(*a*) At the height of Cicero's eloquence many were moved to admiration; but Cato merely laughed at it. "We have," he said, "an entertaining consul."[4] Whether it come before or after, a profitable phrase, a fine stroke of wit, is always in season. (*c*) If it does not fit what goes before or what comes after, it is good in itself. (*a*) I am not one of those who think that good rhythm makes a good poem: let him make a short syllable long if he will; about that it matters not;[5] if the conceptions are pleasing, if the mind and the judgement have played their parts well, "There 's a good poet," I will say, "but a bad versifier," —

(*b*) Emunctæ naris, durus componere versus.[6]

(*a*) Let his work be divested, says Horace, of all its divisions[7] and measures, —

[1] See Tacitus, *Dialogus de Oratoribus*, XIX. The name is *Aper*. Montaigne misconstrues the text.

[2] See Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians*.

[3] See Idem, *Political Precepts*.

[4] See Idem, *Life of Cato*. It was not Cicero's eloquence, but his jokes, at which Cato is said to have laughed.

[5] *Pour cela, non force*.

[6] Of keen scent, but harsh in the composition of his verses. — Horace, *Satires*, I, 4.8.

[7] *Coustures*.

(*b*) Tempora certa modosque, et quod prius ordine verbum est,
Posterius facias, præponens ultima primis,
Invenias etiam disjecti membra poetæ,[1] —

it will not be changed in character by that; even its fragments will be beautiful. Menander, when he was taunted because, the day drawing near on which he had promised a comedy, he had not yet set hand to it, replied: "It is composed and ready; nothing remains to be done save to add the verses.[2] Having the subject and the details [3] arranged in his mind, he took small account of the rest. Since Ronsard and du Bellay have given reputation to our French poetry, every little beginner, it seems to me, uses as swelling words, and manages his cadences almost like them. (*c*) *Plus sonat quam valet.*[4] (*a*) In the opinion of the vulgar there were never so many poets; but while it has been very easy for them to reproduce their rhymes, they fall very far short in imitating the rich descriptions of the one and the delicate fancies of the other.

Aye, but how if he [5] be importuned by the sophistical artifice of some syllogism? Ham makes one drink, drink quenches thirst, therefore ham quenches thirst. (*c*) Let him laugh them to scorn; there is more wit in so doing than in answering this.[6] Let him borrow from Aristippus this diverting counterstroke: "Why should I unloose it when, fettered, it impedes me?" [7] Some one propounding certain dialectical refinements against Cleanthes, Chrysippus said to

[1] [Take away] the rhythm and the metre, and change the order of the words, putting the first last and the last first, and you will find the dispersed limits of the poet. — Horace, *Satires*, I, 4.58, 59, 62. By omitting two lines, Montaigne precisely reverses the thought of Horace.

[2] See Plutarch, *Of the renown of the Athenians.*

[3] *Les choses et la matière.*

[4] There is more sound than worth. — Seneca, *Epistle* 40.5.

[5] Our pupil.

[6] See Idem, *Epistle* 49.6. — The following sentence was written by Montaigne on the Bordeaux copy of 1588, then erased: *Voies ce qu'il en semble a Platon en l'Euthydème: et par tout la guerre jurée de Socrates a l'encontre des Sophismes.*

[7] *Pourquoi le deslierai je, puis que, tout lie, il m'empesche?* See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Aristippus.*

him: "Play those tricks with children, and do not divert the serious thoughts of grown men to such things." [1] (*a*) If these foolish quibbles, (*c*) *contorta et aculeata sophismata*,[2] (*a*) should lead him to believe what is false, that is dangerous; but if they remain without effect, and move him only to laughter, I see not why he should be on his guard against them. Some persons are so foolish that they will go far out of their way [3] to run after a witty remark; (*c*) *aut qui non verba rebus aptant, sed res extrinsecus arcessunt, quibus verba conveniant.*[4] And this other: *Sunt qui alicujus verbi decore placentis vocentur, ad id quod non proposuerant scribere.*[5] I much more readily twist a fine saying in order to fasten it to me,[6] than I twist the thread of my own thought to go in search of it. (*a*) On the contrary, it is for words to do service and to follow; and let Gascon come to the front if French can not get there. I would have the subject predominate and so fill the imagination of him who listens that he shall have no remembrance of the words. The way of speaking that I like is a simple and natural speech, the same on paper as on the lips; a style pithy, sinewy, brief, and concise, (*c*) not so refined and smooth [7] as vehement and quick,—

Hæc demum sapiet dictio, quæ feriet,[8] —

(*a*) more rough than tedious, far removed from affectation, free, loose, and bold: let each fragment have its own form; not pedant-like, not friar-like, not lawyer-like, but rather soldier-like, as Suetonius calls that of Julius Cæsar; (*c*) but indeed I do not well understand why he calls it so.[9]

[1] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Chrysippus*.

[2] Involved and subtle fallacies. — Cicero, *Academica*, II, 24.

[3] *Qui se destournent de leur voye un quart de lieue.*

[4] Or who do not fit words to their subject, but seek out irrelevant subjects for which their words may be suitable. — Quintilian, *De Inst. Orat.*, VIII, 3.

[5] There are those who are drawn by the charm of some pleasing word to a subject they had not proposed to write about.—Seneca, *Epistle* 59.5.

[6] *Pour la coudre sur moi.* [7] *Peigné.*

[8] That word is wise that strikes a blow. — *Epitaph* of Lucan, found in many sixteenth-century editions of his works.

[9] The following passage of the editions of 1580 and 1582 was omitted in all later editions: *Qu'on luy reproche hardiment ce qu'on reprochoit à Seneque, que son langage estoit de chaux vive, mais que le sable en estoit a dire.*

(*b*) I have willingly imitated this disorderliness which we see in our young men in the manner of wearing their apparel — (*c*) a mantle scarf-wise, the cloak over one shoulder, (*b*) and wrinkled hose — which denotes a proud disdain of such outer trappings and indifference to rule. But this seems to me still better employed as regards the manner in talking. (*c*) All affectation, especially in our French vivacity and freedom, is unbecoming to the courtier. And in a monarchy every gentleman should be trained to bear himself like a courtier; wherefore we do well to incline a little toward the artless and disdainful. (*a*) I do not like a stuff in which the joinings and seamings are visible; just as in a beautiful body one should not be able to count the bones and veins. (*c*) *Quæ veritati operam dat oratio, incomposita sit et simplex.*[1] *Quis accurate loquitur, nisi qui vult putide loqui?*[2] Eloquence which diverts our minds to itself is harmful to its subject.

Just as in habiliments it is a sign of weakness to wish to make oneself noticeable by some peculiar and unaccustomed fashion, so, in language, the quest of new-fangled phrases and little-known words comes from a puerile and pedantic ambition. Would that I could make use only of those that are used in the markets of Paris! Aristophanes the grammarian was all at sea[3] when he criticised in Epicurus the simplicity of his words and the aim of his oratorical art, which was solely perspicuity of language.[4] A whole people follows incontinently, by reason of its facility, the habit of imitating a mode of speech; not so quickly, a mode of judging or of thinking. Most readers, when they have found a like garment, think very mistakenly that they have hold of a like body. Strength and sinews can not be borrowed, but the attire and the cloak may be. Most of those who consort with me talk like the Essays, but I know not whether they think in the same way.

[1] Speech in the service of truth should be unstudied and unadorned. — Seneca, *Epistle* 40.4.

[2] Who speaks in a studied manner save him who chooses to speak affectedly? — Idem, *Epistle* 75.

[3] *N'y entendoit rien.*

[4] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Epicurus.*

(*a*) The Athenians, Plato says,[1] especially care for copiousness and elegance of language, the Lacedæmonians for brevity, and the Cretans for the fruitfulness of the ideas rather than for the language; these last are the best advised.[2] Zeno said that he had two kinds of disciples: one, whom he called *φιλολόγους*, who were eager to learn about things, and who were his favourites; the others, *λογοφίλους*, who cared for nothing but words.[3] This is not to say that it is not a fine and excellent thing to express oneself well; but it is not so excellent as it is made out to be; and it tries me that our life is wholly busied in that. I should want chiefly to know well my own language, and that of my neighbours with whom I have the most common intercourse. Greek and Latin are an admirable ornament, no doubt, but we buy it too dear. I will describe here a method of getting it more reasonably than is usually done, which was tried in my own case. Let him who will, make use of it.

My late father, having made all enquiry that a man can make, among scholars and men of intelligence, regarding the most excellent method of education, was apprised of the disadvantage of the method then in use;[4] and was told that the length of time we spend in learning languages, (*c*) which cost the ancient Greeks and Romans nothing, (*a*) is the only reason we can not attain their loftiness of character and of knowledge. I do not believe that this is the only reason. However that may be, the expedient that my father hit upon was this: while I was at nurse and before I could talk,[5] he gave me in charge to a German (who later died a famous doctor in France) wholly ignorant of our language and well versed in Latin. This man, whom he had summoned for this express purpose, and who was paid a very large stipend, had me constantly in his arms. He had also with him two others, less learned, to attend me and relieve him; they talked to me in no other language than the Latin. As for the rest of the household, it was an inviolable rule

[1] See Plato, *Laws*, book I.
[2] In the earlier editions: *Ceux-cy sont les miens.*
[3] See Stobæus, *Sermon* XXXVI.
[4] *De cet inconvenient qui estoit en usage.*
[5] *En nourrice, et avant le premier desnouement de ma langue.*

that neither my father nor my mother, nor manservant, nor maidservant should utter in my presence any thing except those Latin words that each of them had learned in order to talk blunderingly [1] with me. It was wonderful how much they all profited by this: my father and my mother thus learned enough Latin to understand it, and acquired the language sufficiently to use it at need, as did also the other members of the household most in attendance on me. In fact, we were so latinised that it overflowed to our neighbouring villages, where there are still divers Latin names, which have taken root by usage, for craftsmen and for tools. As for me, I was more than six years old before I understood French or Perigordin any more than Arabic; and without system, without books, without grammar or rules, without whipping and without tears, I had learned as pure Latin as my schoolmaster knew, for I could not have adulterated or changed it. If by way of test they desired to give me an exercise in composition after the fashion in colleges, given there in French,[2] to me they must needs give it in bad Latin, to be turned into good. And Nicolas Groucchi, who wrote *De comitiis Romanorum*, Guillaume Gerente, who commented Aristotle, George Buchanan, the great Scotch poet, (*b*) and Marc-Antoine Muret, (*c*) whom France and Italy recognise as the greatest orator of our day, (*a*) who were my private tutors, have often told me that in my childhood I was so ready and so at ease in that language, that they themselves were shy in familiar talk with me. Buchanan, whom I met afterwards in the suite of the late maréchal de Brissac, told me that he was writing on the education of children, and that he was taking mine for a model; for he then had in his charge that comte de Brissac who showed himself later to be so courageous and gallant.[3]

As for Greek, of which I have scarcely any knowledge at all, my father proposed to have it taught me artificially but in a novel way, in the guise of pastime and exercise: we tossed our declensions to and fro after the fashion of those who learn arithmetic and geometry by certain table-games.

[1] *Jargonner.*
[2] *On le donne aux autres en François;* that is, to be turned into Latin.
[3] He died at 26.

For, among other things, he had been advised to make me relish learning and duty by unforced inclination and by my own desire, and to train my mind in all gentleness and liberty, without severity or compulsion. Let me say, he carried this to such an over-scrupulous degree that, because some people hold that it disturbs the delicate brains of children to waken them with a start in the morning, and to rouse them suddenly and violently from sleep (which is much deeper with them than with us), he caused me to be awakened by the sound of some instrument; and he was never without a man who performed that service for me.[1]

This example will suffice to judge of the rest, and to commend the circumspection and affection of so excellent a father, who is not to be discredited if the fruits he gathered did not correspond to such careful cultivation. Two things were the cause of this: in the first place, the sterile and unsuitable soil; for, although I had strong and sound health, and also a gentle and docile nature, I was withal so heavy and sluggish and sleepy that they could not rouse me from my slothfulness, even to make me play. What I saw, I saw clearly, and beneath that dull exterior I nourished bold fancies, and thoughts of a height above my age. My intellect was slow, and went only as far as it was led; my comprehension was tardy, my imagination weak; and on top of every thing I had an incredible lack of memory. From all this it is no wonder that he could draw forth nothing of value. In the second place, like those urged by a frantic desire for a cure who allow themselves to follow all sorts of advice, the good old man, being extremely afraid of failing in a thing that he had so much at heart, allowed himself at last to be led by the common opinion, which, like the cranes, always follows those who go in front, and fell in with the general custom, no longer having about him the persons who had given him those first institutions, which he had brought from Italy; and he sent me at about six years of age to the college of Guienne, which was then very flourishing and the best in France. And there, it is not possible to have greater care than he took, both in the choice of competent private

[1] In 1580 the last clause read: *et avoit un joueur d'espinette pour cet effect.*

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tutors and in all the other details of my training, in which he insisted upon certain peculiar methods contrary to the usage of colleges; but for all that, it was still a college. My Latin was corrupted forthwith, and since then, by unaccustomedness, I have entirely lost the use of it; and my unusual education was of no service to me except that it enabled me at the beginning to skip over the lower classes. For when I left the college, at thirteen, I had finished my course (as they call it), and in truth without any benefit that I can now put my hand on.

The first relish that I had for books came to me from pleasure in the fables of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. For, at the age of about seven or eight, I stole away from every other pleasure to read them, inasmuch as their language was my mother-tongue, and it was the best suited, because of the subject, to my age, that I knew. For as to the *Lancelots du Lac*, (*b*) the *Amadis*, (*a*) the Huons de Bordeaux, and heaps of such trashy books on which childhood wastes its time, I did not even know their names, nor do I yet know their contents, so strict was the care given to my education. I became in consequence more indifferent to the study of my other prescribed lessons. It then happened to me most opportunely to have to do with a man of intelligence as a tutor, who dexterously connived at this irregularity of mine and others of the same sort. For thus I ran through, in quick succession, Virgil, in the *Æneid*, and then Terence, and then Plautus, and Italian comedies, enticed always by the charm of the subject. If he had been so foolish as to interrupt that course, I believe that I should have brought away from the college only a detestation of books, as almost all our gentry do. He managed in this matter ingeniously, pretending to see nothing of it; he sharpened my appetite by allowing me only by stealth those books, and gently keeping me to my duty in the other regular studies. For the principal qualities that my father sought in those to whom he gave me in charge were friendliness and natural approachableness; [1] as my nature had no other fault than inertness and idleness. The danger was, not that I should do wrong, but that I should do nothing. No one prophesied that I should become

[1] *La debonnaireté et facilité de complexion.*

a bad man, but merely a useless one; they foresaw distaste of work, not ill deeds.[1]

(*c*) I am conscious that it has turned out so. The complaints that sound in my ears are of this tenor: "Lazy; cold to the duties of friendship and kinship, and to public duties; too withdrawn." Even the most critical do not say: "Why has he taken? Why has n't he paid?" but: "Why does n't he renounce? Why does n't he give?" I ought to be thankful that they ask of me only such acts of supererogation. But they are unjust, to demand what I do not owe much more strictly than they demand of themselves what they do owe. By declaring this to be my duty they efface the gratification of the act and the gratitude which should be due to me for it: whereas active well-doing on my part ought to count for more, from the consideration that there is nothing to constrain me to it. I am the more at liberty to dispose of my fortune as it is the more my own, [and of myself because I am more my own].[2] However, if I were a great blazoner [3] of my own actions, perchance I might confute these reproaches, and teach some people that they are not so much offended because I do not do enough as because I could do a good deal more than I do.

(*a*) Yet for all this my soul did not fail, at the same time, to have secretly strong agitations, (*c*) and assured and liberal judgements with regard to things with which it was acquainted; (*a*) and it examined them alone without making them known to any one. And, among other things, I truly believe that it would have been altogether incapable of yielding to force and violence. (*b*) Shall I take account of this faculty of my childhood — a command of countenance and a flexibility of voice and gesture in adapting myself to parts that I undertook to play? For before the age when

Alter ab undecimo tum me vix ceperat annus,[4]

I had acted the chief personages in the Latin tragedies of

[1] *De la faineantise, non pas de la malice.*

[2] The clause in brackets is in 1595, but not in the *Édition Municipale.*

[3] *Enlumineur.*

[4] I had scarcely reached my twelfth year.—Virgil, *Eclogues*, VIII, 39. Montaigne reads *vix* for *jam*, doubtless intentionally.

Buchanan, Guerente, and Muret, which were performed with dignity at our college of Guienne. In this Andreas Goveanus, our principal, as in all other branches of his office, was beyond comparison the greatest principal in France, and I was considered a master-workman. It is an amusement which I do not think ill of for children of good families; and I have since seen our princes addict themselves to it in person, after the example of some of the ancients, creditably and commendably. (*c*) It was permissible, in fact, for men of honour to make it their trade in Greece: *Aristoni tragico actori rem aperit: huic et genus et fortuna honesta erant; nec ars, quia nihil tale apud Græcos pudori est, ea deformabat.*[1] (*b*) For I have always accused of unreasonableness those who condemn such recreation, and of injustice those who deny admission to our big cities to actors who are worthy of it, and who grudge the common people these public pleasures. Wise administrations are careful to assemble the citizens and bring them together for exercises and sports no less than for the serious duties of religion; good-fellowship and friendship are enhanced thereby. Moreover, there could not be found for them pastimes more orderly than those which are carried on in every one's presence and before the very eyes of the magistrate. And it would seem to me reasonable that the magistrate, and that the prince at his own expense, should sometimes gratify the common people in this way from a quasi-paternal affection and kindness; (*c*) and that in the populous cities there should be places set apart and arranged for such spectacles: some diversion from worse and hidden doings.

(*a*) To return to my subject, there is nothing like tempting the appetite and the interest; otherwise, we make only asses laden with books; with strokes of the birch we give into their keeping their pocketfuls of learning, which, if it is to serve any purpose, we must not merely give lodging to — we must espouse it.

[1] He disclosed the matter to Ariston, the tragic actor, whose family and whose fortune were distinguished, and whose profession did not injure his position; for among the Greeks it is not to be ashamed of. — Livy, XXIV, 24.

CHAPTER XXVII

IT IS UNWISDOM TO LEAVE TO OUR KNOWLEDGE THE DECISION OF WHAT IS TRUE AND WHAT IS FALSE[1]

This is one of the Essays which are important as expressing Montaigne's power of criticism. It must be compared and contrasted with a later one, "Of Cripples" (Book III, chapter 11), if we would know Montaigne's mind. Here he is feeling his way, there he has found it; here he is as a bird beating against the walls of the room into which he has accidentally entered; later he has flown out of the window and is at ease in the space and freedom that are his natural elements. The subject of his discourse in both these Essays is *miracles;* and it was of these two that Pascal was thinking when he wrote: "How I condemn those who question about miracles! Montaigne speaks in a right manner of them in two places. In one [the later Essay] we see how prudent he is; none the less in the other he is a believer, and throws scorn on the incredulous."

This is quite true; and yet I think it would be a mistake to draw the inference from these or any other of Montaigne's writings that he believed less in his later days than in his earlier. He was never, often as he is so called, a sceptic; he only was more clearly aware of his own ignorance, of the necessary limitations of human knowledge, than most men — and by just that was wiser than most men. "Montaigne — the Sceptic" Emerson writes of; but he defines "scepticism" as "the attitude assumed by the thinker in relation to the particulars which society adores, but which he sees to be reverend only in their tendency and spirit. *The ground occupied by the sceptic is the vestibule of the temple.*"

Montaigne's thought clarified with years; he saw more and more distinctly the essential principles of life, and more and more definitely and *unquestioningly believed* in them. How far at any time he believed in the dogmas of the church he never left, I think he himself hardly knew, and very little cared. It was principles of *action*, not dogmas of faith, that seemed to him of importance. For these he cared almost *passionately*, strange as the word may sound to some ears when applied to his conditions of feeling. And here, to my apprehension, lies one of the great differences between him and a man of recent days, who has sometimes been compared to him — Renan. Renan's philosophical detachment from the usual objects of ambition was not due to an absence of ambition, but to peculiar ambitions; whereas Montaigne's sole ambition was to appear in his own eyes "un honnête homme." This may be called a common ambition, but few men have felt it with Montaigne's ardour and intensity, and for very few has it been their sole ambition, as with

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[1] *C'est folie de rapporter le vrai et le faux à nostre suffisance.*

him. How many men could use his proud words: "In every thing and everywhere my eyes are enough to keep me straight; there are no others which watch me so closely or which I more respect." This may really be considered the *motto* of his life.

I have wandered far from his views of miracles — apparently, not really, far; for every thing that Montaigne says is so illuminated by what he was, that his opinions are of double force when one has become familiar with his personality and hears his very voice as he utters them. It is very entertaining when one also hears, as one often may, Lord Bacon's voice talking with him, answering or enforcing his opinions. Here, for instance, where Montaigne says, "We must judge things with more reverence for this infinite power of nature," Bacon answers (having also in his thought Montaigne's expression about *des enchantements, des sorcelleries*), "Neither am I of opinion in this history of marvels, that superstitious narratives of sorceries, witchcrafts, charms, dreams, divinations, and the like, where there is an assurance and clear evidence of the fact, should be altogether excluded. For it is not yet known in what cases, and how far, effects attributed to superstition participate of natural causes."

It will be felt in this Essay, as so often, how modern are the tone of Montaigne's thought and the objects of his interest.

IT is not perchance without reason that we attribute to simple-mindedness and ignorance the readiness to believe and to be convinced; for it seems to me that I once learned that belief was, as it were, an impression that was made on our minds, and that, the softer and less resistant the mind, the easier it was to imprint something upon it. (*c*) *Ut necesse est lancem in libra ponderibus impositis deprimi, sic animum perspicuis cedere.*[1] The more empty and without counterpoise the mind is, the more readily the scale sinks under the weight of the first argument. (*a*) That is why children, the common people, women, and sick persons are more subject to be led by the ears. But also, on the other hand, it is an absurd assumption to scorn and condemn as false what seems to us not probable: which is a common fault of those who think that they have more intelligence than the vulgar.[2] I used to be so minded myself, and if I heard some one talk of spirits

[1] As of necessity the scale of the balance must sink when weights are placed upon it, so the mind must yield to clear proof. — Cicero, *Academica*, II, 12.

[2] *Quelque suffisance outre la commune.*

returning, or of prognostications of future things, of enchantments, or sorceries, or tell some other tale of which I could make nothing,[1] —

> Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,
> Nocturnos lemures portentaque Thessala,[2] —

I felt compassion for the poor people deceived by such follies. And now I think that I was at least as much to be pitied myself; not that experience has since then shown me any thing beyond my former beliefs, and not certainly from lack of interest; but reason has taught me that to condemn a thing so positively as false and impossible is to assume the advantage of knowing the boundaries and limits of the will of God and of the power of our mother Nature; and that there is no more notable foolishness in the world than to measure these by our capacity and intelligence. If we call contrary to reason, or miraculous, those things which our reason can not grasp, how many are constantly offered to our sight! When we consider through what mists and how gropingly we are brought to acquaintance with most things that are in our hands, surely we shall find that it is rather familiarity than knowledge which takes away their strangeness, —

> (*b*) Jam nemo, fessus satiate videndi,
> Suspicere in cœli dignatur lucida templa,[3] —

(*a*) and that these same things, if they were presented to us newly, we should find as incredible as any others, or more so.

> Si nunc primum mortalibus adsint
> Ex improviso, ceu sint objecta repente,
> Nil magis his rebus poterat mirabile dici,
> Aut minus ante quod auderent fore credere gentes?[4]

[1] *Où je ne peusse pas mordre.*

[2] Dreams, the terrors of magic, miracles, witches, spectres of the night, and Thessalian prodigies. — Horace, *Epistles*, II, 2.208.

[3] Now no man, weary and sated with seeing, deigns to lift his eyes to the luminous spaces of the sky. — Lucretius, II, 1038.

[4] If these things were for the first time unexpectedly presented to mortals, or were suddenly thrown before them, what more wonderful could be thought of, what that previously the world would have less dared to believe possible? — *Ibid.*, 1033.

He who had never seen a river thought that the first he came to was the ocean; and the largest things with which we are acquainted, we believe them to be the utmost that Nature can do in that kind.

(*b*) Scilicet et fluvius, qui non est maximus, ei est
Qui non ante aliquem majorem vidit, et ingens
Arbor homoque videtur; (*a*) et omnia de genere omni
Maxima quæ vidit quisque, hæc ingentia fingit.[1]

(*c*) *Consuetudine oculorum assuescunt animi, neque admirantur, neque requirunt rationes earum rerum quas semper vident.*[2] The novelty of things, more than their importance, spurs us on to seek the causes of them.

(*a*) We must judge things with more reverence for this infinite power of Nature,[3] and with more recognition of our ignorance and weakness. How many improbable things there are, testified to by people worthy of credence, which, if we can not be convinced about them, should at least be left in suspense; for to condemn them as impossible is to pretend, by a rash assumption, to knowledge of the extent of possibility. (*c*) If we understood clearly the difference there is between the impossible and the unusual, and between what is contrary to the order of the course of nature and what is contrary to the common opinion of mankind, neither believing hastily nor disbelieving lightly, we should observe the rule, "Nothing too much," enjoined by Chilo.[4]

(*a*) When we find in Froissart[5] that the comte de Foix learned in Béarn of the defeat of King John of Castile at Juberoth the day after it happened, and the manner of this

[1] To be sure, a river which is not very great seems so to a man who has not previously seen a greater one; and a tree appears huge, and so does a man; and an object of any kind, if it be greater than has been seen, is supposed to be large. — Lucretius, VI, 674.

[2] Our minds become accustomed to things from the familiarity of our eyes with them, and feel no wonder, and ask no questions about the causes of things which they continually behold. — Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.*, II, 38.

[3] In earlier editions, *puissance de Dieu.*

[4] This epigram is ascribed to various sages — by Diogenes Laertius to Solon; but it is oftenest given to Chilo. See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Thales;* Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, II, 12; Pliny, *Natural History*, VII, 32.

[5] Book III, chap. 17; it was in 1385.

that he alleges, we may well smile; and so, too, when our annals say that Pope Honorius, on the very day that King Philippe Auguste died at Mantes, had his obsequies publicly celebrated, and commanded them to be performed throughout Italy;[1] for the authority of these witnesses is not perhaps of sufficient weight to hold us in check. But when Plutarch, besides several examples which he alleges from ancient times, says that he knows with certain knowledge that, in the reign of Domitian, the news of the battle lost by Antonius in Germany, many days' journey from Rome, was made public there and dispersed through the world on the same day when the battle was lost;[2] and if Cæsar maintains that it has often happened that the report has forerun the event, shall we say[3] that these honest folk allowed themselves to be deceived like the common herd, and were not as clear-sighted as we? Is there any thing more delicate, more clear, and more keen than Pliny's judgement when it pleases him to bring it into play? any thing further removed from emptiness? I say nothing of the excellence of his learning, of which I make less account. In what part of these two qualities do we surpass him? And yet there is no meanest scholar who does not convict him of falsehood, and who does not undertake to instruct him concerning the movement of the works of nature.

When we read in Bouchet of the miracles wrought by the relics of St. Hilary,[4] we can pass on:[5] his credit is not great enough to deprive us of the liberty of gainsaying him; but to condemn altogether[6] all such stories seems to me singularly overbold. The great St. Augustine testifies to having seen, at Milan, a blind child recover its sight by the relics of Saints Gervais and Protaise;[7] at Carthage, a woman cured of a cancer by the sign of the cross that a woman lately baptised made upon her; Hesperius, a familiar friend of his,

[1] See Nicolle Gilles, *Annales et Chroniques de France*, etc.
[2] See Plutarch, *Life of Paulus Æmilius*.
[3] The text has *dirons nous pas*.
[4] See Bouchet, *Annales d'Aquitaine*.
[5] *Passe* = *soit, ne faites pas attention, laissez passer.*
[6] *D'un train.*
[7] See St. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, XXII, 8. The three following examples are taken from the same work.

had driven out the spirits that infested his house, with a little earth from our Lord's sepulchre, and this same earth having been taken afterward to the church, a paralytic brought thither was straightway cured; a woman in a procession, having touched the shrine of St. Stephen with a nosegay, and having with this nosegay rubbed her eyes, recovered her sight, lost long before; and several other miracles, at which he says that he was present. Of what shall we accuse him and two holy bishops, Aurelius and Maximinus, whom he summons for his witnesses? Shall it be of ignorance, lack of intelligence, credulity, or of evil intent and imposture? Is there a man in our day so bold as to think himself comparable to them, whether in virtue and piety, or in learning, judgement, and sufficiency? (*c*) *Qui ut rationem nullam afferrent, ipsa auctoritate me frangerent.*[1]

(*a*) It is a dangerous audacity, and of moment, besides the unreasonable rashness that it carries with it, to despise what we do not understand. For when, by virtue of your eminent intelligence, you have established the boundaries of truth and falsehood, and you find that you have necessarily to believe things in which there is even more that is strange than in what you deny, you are immediately compelled to forego these boundaries. Now, what seems to me to bring so much confusion into our thoughts in our present religious troubles is the partial surrender that the Catholics make of their belief: it seems to them that they show themselves to be moderate and wise when they concede to their opponents some of the points in controversy. But, besides that they do not see what an advantage it is to him who attacks you for you to begin to give way to him and to draw back, and how greatly that encourages him to pursue his advantage, the very points that they select as the most trivial are sometimes very important. We must either submit altogether to the authority of our ecclesiastical government, or dispense with it altogether: it is not for us to fix how much obedience we owe it. And furthermore, — I can say this because I have tried it, — having formerly made use of this freedom in my own selection and sifting, regarding as of no importance

[1] Even though they adduced no reason, their mere authority would master me. — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, I, 21.

certain points in the ceremonial of our Church, which seem to have an aspect more or less idle or strange, when I have come to confer about them with learned men, I have found that these things have a substantial and very solid foundation, and that it is only stupidity and ignorance which cause us to receive them with less reverence than the rest. Why do we not remember how much we are conscious of contradiction in our very judgement? how many things we regarded yesterday as articles of faith which are fables to us to-day? Vain-glory and curiosity are the scourges of our soul. The last leads us to put our noses into every thing, and the other forbids us to leave any thing unsettled and undecided.

CHAPTER XXVIII

OF FRIENDSHIP

This Essay is based on the friendship between Montaigne and La Boëtie, and there could not be a more fitting motto for it than a stanza of Ben Jonson's fine ode to the two friends, Sir Lucius Cary (afterward Lord Falkland) and Sir Henry Morison.

Jonson speaks of the

> simple love of greatness and of good,
> That knits brave minds and manners more than blood, —

adding: —

> This made you first to know the why
> You liked; then, after, to apply
> That liking: and approach so, one the t' other,
> That either grew a portion of the other.

Before reading this Essay there should be read the letter Montaigne wrote to his father at the time of La Boëtie's death in 1563 — fourteen years before this Essay was written. The causes of Montaigne's ardent and admiring affection for him are there, not set forth, but revealed; and after reading the letter, and thus passing day after day with Montaigne by the bed of his dying friend, we find ourselves reading between the lines of the Essay a full record of the personal emotion which years could not dull. A touching indication of the permanent strength of this emotion is given in the Journal kept by Montaigne when travelling in 1580. He was ill, and he says: "This morning, writing to M. Ossat [the cardinal and famous statesman], I fell into such sad thoughts of M. de la Boëtie, and was so long a time engrossed by them that it did me much

harm." In connection with the letter to his father should also be read Montaigne's four letters to L'Hôpital, M. de Foix, and two other gentlemen, about the writings and character of La Boëtie. These are to be found in several of the French editions of the Essays.

That Montaigne's estimate of La Boëtie was not due merely to his profound friendship is proved by the judgements of other contemporaries. De Thou mentions "three great men" whom France lost in 1563, and counts La Boëtie as one of them, though he was but thirty-three years old. It is also a proof of the strength of his character and abilities, that his writings may still be read with interest. He is the noblest representative of those men of his time who derived strength from the teachings of antiquity. His love of mankind, his faith in human nature, his lofty and ardent passion for public welfare, and the high simplicity and sincerity of his course of life, made him, in Montaigne's phrase, *un grand homme de bien*. In his writings may be discovered a vehement and somewhat utopian nature, but also excellent good sense, with peculiar sweetness and delicacy of feeling. Montaigne speaks of "la tendre amour qu'il portoit à sa miserable patrie," [1] and there is expression of it in a Latin poem addressed to Montaigne and another friend, and probably written about 1560. Americans may take a special interest in these verses, because, confiding to his friends his wish to fly from "these cruel days," to "bid a long and last farewell to my native land," his thoughts turn to ' those unknown tracts of earth extending to the West" where are found *vacuas sedes et inania regna*. "Here must we go, thither must we bend our oars and turn our sails." Imagine Montaigne and La Boëtie coming here a hundred years before the Pilgrim Fathers!

How warmly La Boëtie returned Montaigne's affection is testified in his will, where, leaving him his books, he speaks of "M. de Montaigne . . . mon intime frère et immutable amy."

This Essay is not merely narrative. In the first pages Montaigne treats of friendship in general, and argues that the highest friendship has no other "cause and end and fruit" but itself.

He then considers the friendship of children to their fathers, which he thinks is rather to be called respect; and that of brothers, which must be somewhat uncertain. And to compare the affection we bear women to friendship — ah, that cannot be! it is quite too inferior a passion!

As we read Montaigne's account of his "first meeting" with La Boëtie, there is something that recalls Hamlet's words to Horatio:

> Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,
> And could of men distinguish, her election
> Hath seal'd thee for herself;

and throughout the Essay we are reminded, naturally, of what other men have said in love and praise of their dead friends. Montaigne speaks of "the four years when it was given me to enjoy the sweet com-

[1] Letter to L'Hôpital.

panionship and society of this personage." Tennyson says (*In Memoriam*):

> The path by which we twain did go,
> Which led by tracts that pleas'd as well,
> Through four sweet years arose and fell
> From flower to flower, from snow to snow.

Montaigne writes, untranslatably: "Depuis le jour que je le perdis, je ne foys que trainer languissant." Dryden (*Threnodia Augustalis*):

> No wife, no brother, such a grief could know,
> Nor any name but friend.

If, in connection with this Essay, one reads the fine essay by Bacon on the same subject, one may perceive that that was written by a *moralist*, this by a *poet*.

OBSERVING the method of work of a painter in my employ, I have been tempted to imitate him. He chooses the best spot in the middle of each wall, to place there a picture worked out with all his skill; and the empty space all about it he fills with grotesques, which are fantastic paintings having no other charm than diversity and strangeness. And, in truth, what are these writings of mine but grotesques and monstrous bodies, botched up with divers members, without definite shape, having neither order, sequence, nor proportion, except by chance?

Desinit in piscem mulier formosa superne.[1]

I go along with my painter in this second point, but I fall short in the other and better part; for my ability does not go so far as to venture to undertake a fine picture, of high finish and fashioned according to art. I have thought of borrowing such a one from Etienne de la Boëtie, which will do honour to all the rest of this work. It is a treatise to which he gave the name of *La Servitude Volontaire;* but those who did not know this have since very aptly rebaptised it *Le Contre-Un*. He wrote it by way of essay in his early youth,[2] in praise of liberty and against tyrants. It has

[1] A beautiful woman above, ending in a fish. — Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 4.

[2] In the earlier editions this clause occurred here: *n'ayant pas attaint le dix huitiesme an de son aage.*

for a long time been in the hands of men of understanding, not without very great and well-deserved commendation, for it is as noble and perfect as possible. Yet it is far from being the best that he could do; and if, in his maturer years, when I knew him, he had conceived such a plan as mine, of writing down his thoughts, we should now see many things of rare excellence which would bring us very near to the fame of antiquity; for especially in this portion of the gifts of Nature, I know no man who can be compared to him. But nothing of his has survived except this discourse — and that only by chance, and I believe that he never saw it after it left his hands — and some notes upon that edict of January,[1] famous in our civil wars, which also will perchance find their place elsewhere.

This is all that I have been able to recover of his (*c*) (I whom, when death was at hand, he made, in his will, heir of his library and his papers, as a most loving remembrance of him), (*a*) except the little volume of his works which I have had published;[2] and I am under special obligation to this treatise because it was the means of our first acquaintance. For it was shown to me a long while before I saw him, and gave me my first knowledge of his name, thus opening the way to the friendship between us, which we cherished as long as God willed, so absolute and so perfect that surely the like has seldom been read of, and among the men of our day[3] no trace is seen of any such. So many accidental circumstances must concur to build it up, that it is much if fortune attains that end once in three centuries. There is nothing to which nature seems more to have shown us the way than to companionship;[4] (*c*) and Aristotle says that good legislators have given more thought to friendship than to justice.[5] (*a*) Now the highest point of its perfection is this. (*c*) For in general all those companionships which pleasure or profit, or public or private needs, beget and nourish, are in so far less beautiful and noble, and in so far less true friendships, as they

[1] 1562. La Boëtie's "notes" have recently (1917) been published by M. Bonnefon in the *Revue de l'Histoire Littéraire de la France*.

[2] In 1571, under the title, *La Mesnagerie de Xenophon*, etc.

[3] *Nos hommes*.

[4] *Société*.

[5] See Aristotle, *Ethics*, VIII, 1.4.

introduce another cause and end and fruit into friendship than friendship itself. Nor do these four common kinds,[1]—natural, social, hospitable, sexual,—separately or conjointly, sort well with it.[2] (*a*) The sentiment of children for their fathers is rather respect; friendship is nourished by familiar intercourse, which can not be between them on account of the too great difference in age, and might conflict with natural obligations; for neither can all the secret thoughts of fathers be communicated to their children, lest they give rise to an unseemly intimacy, nor can the warnings and reproofs which are among the first duties of friendship be administered by children to their fathers. Nations have been found where it was the custom for children to kill their fathers, and others where fathers killed their children, to avoid the burden they may sometimes become;[3] and by nature the one depends on the ruin of the other.[4] There have been philosophers who disdained this natural bond; witness Aristippus: when some one insisted upon the affection that he owed his children because they issued from him, he began to spit, saying that truly that also issued from him, that indeed we also engender lice and worms.[5] And that other whom Plutarch tried to induce to be reconciled to his brother: "I care no more for him," he said, "for having come out of the same hole."[6] In truth, the name of brother is a delightful name, and full of loving-kindness; and for that reason he and I made it the symbol of our union; but the commingling of property, the divisions, and the wealth of the one being the poverty of the other, wondrously weakens and relaxes the fraternal bond: brothers having to pursue their advancement in the same path and the same direction, it is inevitable that they often jostle and clash with one another. Moreover, why should the resemblance and relation which engenders true and perfect friendships exist between brothers? Father and son may be of entirely

[1] That is, of companionship.

[2] That is, with friendship.

[3] See *supra*, chap. 23, pp. 152, 153.

[4] A literal translation of a wholly incomprehensible sentence. In the earlier editions this sentence followed: *l'amitié n'en vient jamais là.*

[5] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Aristippus.*

[6] See Plutarch, *Of Brotherly Love.*

different dispositions, and brothers also: this is my son, this is my kinsman; but he is a barbarian, a villain, or a fool. And then, too, in proportion as these friendships are enjoined upon us by natural law and obligation, there is less of our own choice and free will in them; and our free will has no product which is more properly its own than affection and friendship. It is not that I have not had in this direction all possible experience, for I had the best father that ever lived and the most indulgent, even in his extreme old age, and being of a family famous and exemplary for generations in this matter of brotherly concord,—

(*b*) et ipse
Notus in fratres animi paterni.[1]

(*a*) To compare with it the affection for women, although it proceeds from our own choice, is impossible; it can not be placed in the same category. Its flame, I admit, —

neque enim est dea nescia nostri
Quæ dulcem curis miscet amaritiem,[2] —

is more active, hotter, and fiercer; but it is a reckless and fickle flame, wavering and changing, fever-like, subject to risings and fallings; and it holds but a nook in us. In friendship there is a general and universal warmth, temperate, moreover, and uniform, a constant and settled warmth, all sweetness and smoothness, in which there is nothing of roughness or poignancy. What is more, in love there is but a mad craving for what eludes us.

Come segue la lepre il cacciatore
Al freddo, al caldo, alla montagna, al lito;
Ne piu l'estima poi che presa vede,
Et sol dietro a chi fugge affretta il piede.[3]

As soon as it enters into the bounds of friendship, that is to say, into full agreement of desires, it languishes and weak-

[1] One famed for fatherly affection toward his brothers. — Horace, *Odes*, II, 2.6. Montaigne supplied the words *Et ipse*.

[2] For I am not unknown to the goddess who mingles a sweet bitterness with the torments of love. — Catullus, LXVIII, 17.

[3] So the hunter follows the hare, in cold and in heat, on the mountain and by the shore; he no longer cares for it when it has become his prey, and he pursues only that which flees. — Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, X, 7.

ens; enjoyment destroys it, as its object is fleshly and it is subject to satiety. Friendship, on the contrary, is enjoyed in the degree in which it is desired, nor does it spring up, become rooted, and grow, except by enjoyment as being of spiritual nature, and the soul being purified by the exercise of it. Subordinate to this perfect friendship, these ephemeral loves have in other days found lodging in me — not to speak of him [1] who reveals this only too clearly in his verses. So these two passions have entered into me, known to each other, but never in rivalry, the first holding its course with a lofty and proud flight, and disdainfully beholding the other go its way far below.

As for marriage, besides that it is a bargain of which the entrance only is free, its continuance being constrained and compelled, resting upon other things than our will, — and a bargain, too, which is ordinarily entered into for other objects, — there happen in it innumerable foreign complications to be disentangled, sufficient to break the thread and trouble the course of a lively affection; whereas in friendship there are no dealings or transactions save with itself. Moreover, to speak truly, the usual capacity of women is not equal to the demands of the communion and intercourse which is the sustenance of that sacred bond; nor do their minds seem firm enough to sustain the pressure of so hard and so lasting a knot. But surely, save for that, if there could be formed such a free and voluntary connection, wherein not only should the souls have this perfect employment, but the bodies too should have their share in the alliance, (*c*) into which the whole man should enter, (*a*) it is certain that the friendship would be more full and more complete; but there has never yet been an instance of this sex reaching that point, (*c*) and by the common consent of the ancient schools this is denied. (*a*) And by our morals that other Greek license is justly abhorred; (*c*) which, moreover, from having necessarily, according to their custom, so great a disparity in age and difference in offices between the lovers, answered no better to the perfect union and harmony which in this we require. *Quis est enim iste amor amicitiæ? Cur neque deformem adolescentem quisquam amat, neque*

[1] La Boëtie.

formosum senem? [1] For the very picture that the Academy draws of it [2] will not, I think, disprove me, if I say this as coming from it:[3] that this first frenzy, inspired by the son of Venus in the lover's heart, for the possession of the flower of delicate youthfulness to which [4] they permit all the presumptuous and passionate efforts that an immoderate ardour can suggest, was based simply on external beauty, the deceitful design of corporeal generation; for it could not be based on the mind, which had not yet shown itself, which was but newly born and not yet blossoming. That, if this frenzy seized upon a mean heart, the instruments of its pursuit were riches, gifts, favour in promotion to places of dignity, and other such base trafficking which they [5] condemn. If it fell upon one of nobler temper, the means of pleasing adopted were noble likewise: philosophic instructions, teachings to reverence religion, to obey the laws, to die for the good of one's country — examples of valour, wisdom, justice; the lover studying how to make himself acceptable by the charm and beauty of his mind (that of his body being long since faded), and hoping, by this mental companionship, to make a stronger and more lasting contract. When this pursuit came to a result in due season (for while they did not require of the lover that he should take time and use discretion in his pursuit, they most strictly required this of the loved one, since he had to judge of an inward beauty difficult to recognise and hard to discover), then there was born in the loved one a desire for a spiritual beauty. With him this was the principal thing, the bodily was fortuitous and secondary; with the lover it was just the opposite. For this reason they prefer the loved one, and aver that the gods too prefer him; and they find great fault with the poet Æschylus for having, in describing the love of Achilles and Patroclus,[6] given the lover's part to Achilles, who was in the first and beardless bloom of his youth, and the most beauti-

[1] What, after all, is this friendship-love? Why is it that an ugly youth or a handsome old man is never beloved? — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, IV, 33.

[2] See Plato, *Symposium* (discourse of Pausanias).

[3] That is, from the Academy.

[4] That is, to the frenzy.

[5] That is, the Academy.

[6] See Plato, *Symposium* (discourse of Pausanias).

ful of the Greeks. From this complete participation, its most commanding and worthiest part exercising its functions and predominating, they declare that there flowed results of great utility, private and public; that it was the strength of those countries which admitted the practice of it, and the chief bulwark of equity and of liberty; witness the salutary loves of Harmodius and Aristogeiton.[1] Therefore they call it sacred and divine, and to their thinking only the violence of tyrants and the weakness of peoples are opposed to it. In fine, all that we can concede in favour of the Academy is to say that this was a love that ended in friendship; which agrees not ill with the Stoic definition of love: *Amorem conatum esse amicitiæ faciendæ ex pulchritudinis specie.*[2] I return to my description of a kind [3] more equitable and equable. *Omnino amicitiæ, corroboratis jam confirmatisque ingeniis et ætatibus, judicandæ sunt.*[4]

(*a*) To continue — what we commonly call friends and friendships are only acquaintances and familiar relations formed by some chance or convenience, by means whereof our minds meet kindly. In the friendship of which I speak they are blended and melted one into another in a commingling so entire that they lose sight of that which first united them and can not again find it.[5] If I am urged to say why I loved him, I feel that it can not be expressed (*c*) save by replying: "Because it was he, because it was I." (*a*) There is, beyond all my reasoning and beyond all that I can say in detail about it, I know not what inexplicable and inevitable force that brought about this union. (*c*) We sought each other before we had met, by reason of what we had heard of each other, which had more effect on our emotions than comports with hearsay reports, I believe, by some decree of Heaven. We embraced by our names. And at our first meeting, which was accidental, at a great festival and gathering in the city, we found ourselves so fast held, so well known, so bound to

[1] See Plato, *Symposium.*

[2] Love is the desire to win friendship from a beautiful being. — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, IV, 34.

[3] Of friendship.

[4] In general, friendships are not to be judged of until both the mind and the body have strength and maturity. — Idem, *De Amicitia*, XX.

[5] *Qu'elles effacent et ne retrouvent plus la couture qui les a jointes.*

each other, that thereafter nothing was so close to either of us as each was to the other. He wrote an excellent Latin satire, which has been published,[1] wherein he excuses and explains the suddenness of our mutual understanding which so quickly reached its perfection. Having so short a time to last, and having begun so late (for we were both grown men and he a few years the elder),[2] it had no time to lose and to fashion itself on the model of weak and orderly friendships, which require so many precautions in the way of long preliminary intercourse. Such a one as this has no other type than itself and can resemble only itself. (*a*) It was no one special consideration, nor two, nor three, nor four, nor a thousand; it was I know not what quintessence of all this blending which, having completely possessed itself of my will, led it to plunge into and lose itself in his; (*c*) and having completely possessed itself of his will, led it to plunge into and lose itself in mine, by force of a like eagerness and impulse. (*a*) I say "lose" with truth, for it left us nothing that was our own, or that was either his or mine.[3]

When Lælius, in presence of the Roman consuls who, after the condemnation of Tiberius Gracchus, proceeded against all those who had held intercourse with him, enquired of Caius Blosius — who was his[4] chief friend — how much he would have been willing to do for him, and he replied, "Every thing," — "What, every thing?" rejoined Lælius. "But if he had ordered you to set fire to our temples?" — "He would never have ordered me to do that," replied Blosius. — "But if he had?" Lælius persisted. — "I would have obeyed," was the reply.[5] If he was so wholly the friend of Gracchus as the histories say, he had no occasion to offend the consuls by this last and audacious admission, and should not have deviated from the confidence he had in the mind of Gracchus.[6] But, moreover, they who blame this

[1] By Montaigne himself, in 1571.

[2] La Boëtie was born in 1530, Montaigne in 1533.

[3] That is, that belonged solely to either of us.

[4] That is, Tiberius's.

[5] See Cicero, *De Amicitia*, XI; Plutarch, *Parallel between Tiberius and Gaius;* Valerius Maximus, IV, 7.1.

[6] At this point in the early editions (1580 to 1588) occurs the sentence, *de laquelle il se pouvoit respondre comme de la sienne.*

reply as treasonable do not well understand this mystery, and do not admit — as is the fact — that he held the mind of Gracchus in his hand, both through influence and through knowledge.[1] (*c*) They were more friends than citizens, more friends than friends or enemies of their country, than friends of ambition and turmoil. Being completely pledged each to the other, each completely held the reins of the other's inclinations; and assuming this team [2] to be guided by virtue and governed by reason (as indeed it is quite impossible otherwise to conduct it), the reply of Blosius is what it should have been. If their acts did not mutually fit together, they were neither friends one of the other, nor friends to themselves, by my measure. (*a*) Besides, that reply signifies nothing more than mine would, if, to one who should make this enquiry of me: "If your will bade you kill your daughter, would you kill her?" I should answer affirmatively. For that is no evidence of my readiness to do the deed, because I have no suspicion of my will, and as little of that of such a friend. It is not in the power of all the arguments in the world to dislodge me from my certainty of the intentions and judgements of my friend: no act of his could be presented to me, no matter what aspect it might wear, that I should not instantly discern its motive. Our souls journeyed together so in unison,[3] they regarded each other with such ardent affection, and with like affection revealed themselves one to the other, to their inmost depths, that not only did I know his soul as intimately as my own, but I would surely have trusted myself to him more freely than to myself.

Let no one place in the same rank those other everyday friendships; I have as much knowledge as any man of them, and of the most perfect in their kind; (*b*) but I advise no one to confuse their rules: he would be deluded. In these other friendships one must walk, bridle in hand, with prudence and caution; the tie is not fastened in such wise that one has not reason to distrust it. "Love him," says Chilo,

[1] *Il tenoit la volonté de Gracchus en sa manche, et par puissance et par connoissance.*

[2] *Cet harnois.*

[3] *Nos ames ont charrié si uniement ensemble.*

"as if you might some day come to hate him; hate him as if you might some day come to love him." [1] This precept, which is abominable in this sovereign and commanding friendship, is sound in the practice of ordinary, (*c*) commonplace friendships, to which we should apply the frequent saying of Aristotle: "O my friends, there is no friend." [2]

(*a*) In this noble intercourse, the services and benefactions that keep alive other friendships do not deserve to be taken at all into account, being occasioned by the complete blinding of our wills; for, just as the friendship that I have for myself is not augmented by the aid that I give myself at need, — whatever the Stoics may say, — and as I am no wise grateful to myself for the service that I render to myself; so, the union of two such friends being truly perfect, it causes them to lose the sense of such duties, and to detest and banish as between themselves those words implying separation and difference — benefit, obligation, gratitude, entreaty, thanks, and their like. Every thing being in fact common as between them, — wills, thoughts, judgements, property, wives, children, honour, and life, — (*c*) and their accord being that of one soul in two bodies, according to the very apt definition of Aristotle,[3] — (*a*) they can not lend or give any thing to each other. That is why the lawmakers, in order to ennoble marriage by some fanciful resemblance to this divine union, forbid gifts between husband and wife, meaning by that to imply that every thing should belong to each of them, and that they have nothing to divide and part between them. If, in the sort of friendship of which I am speaking, one could give to the other, he who should receive the gift would be the one who conferred an obligation on his friend: for each seeking above all other things to confer a benefit on the other, he who affords the subject and the opportunity is the one who plays the liberal part,[4] giving his

[1] See Aulus Gellius, I, 3. This saying is attributed to Bias by Diogenes Laertius in his life of that philosopher; also by Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, II, 13, and by Cicero, *De Amicitia*, XVI.

[2] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Aristotle.*

[3] See *Ibid.*

[4] *Qui faict le liberal.* In the early editions the reading was, *Qui faict l'honneste et le courtois.*

friend the delight of accomplishing in regard to him what he [1] most desires. (*c*) When Diogenes the philosopher had need of money, he used to say that he asked it back from his friends, not that he asked for it.[2] (*a*) And to show how this may be put into effect, I will narrate a singular ancient example of it.

Eudamidas of Corinth had two friends: Charixenus a Sicyonian, and Aretheus a Corinthian. When he came to die, being a poor man and his two friends being rich, he made his will thus: "I bequeath to Aretheus the support of my mother and the taking care of her in her old age; to Charixenus the finding a husband for my daughter and giving her as large a dowry as he can; and in case one of them shall die, I substitute for him the survivor." Those who were the first to see this will made sport of it; but his legatees,[3] having been informed of it, accepted it with extreme pleasure. And one of them, Charixenus, having died five days later, the substitution being carried out in favour of Aretheus, he took scrupulous care of the mother, and of five talents that he possessed he gave two and a half to his own only daughter on her marriage, and two and a half to the daughter of Eudamidas, and celebrated both nuptials on the same day.[4]

This example is very complete, except for one thing, namely, the multitude of friends: for this perfect friendship of which I speak is indivisible, each gives himself so entirely to his friend that he has nothing to dispose of elsewhere; on the contrary, he is grieved that he is not double, triple, or quadruple, and that he has not several souls and several wills, to bestow them all on that object. Ordinary friendships can be divided: one may love the beauty of this person, the courtesy of another, the liberality of another; the paternal affection of one man, the brotherly love of another, and so forth; but the friendship that possesses the soul and rules over it in full sovereignty — it is impossible that it should be double. (*c*) If two friends should call for assist-

[1] That is, the friend.

[2] *Qu'il le redemandoit à ses amis, non qu'il le demandoit.* See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Diogenes.*

[3] *Heritiers.*

[4] See Lucian, *Toxaris*, XXII.

ance at the same time, to which would you hasten? If they should require from you inconsistent services, what course would you pursue? If one entrusted to your secrecy a thing which it would be useful for the other to know, how would you extricate yourself? The sole and principal friendship dissolves all other obligations. The secret that I have sworn to disclose to no other, I may without perjury make known to him who is not another — he is myself. It is enough of a miracle to double oneself, and they do not know the greatness of it who talk of making themselves three. Nothing is the uttermost which has its like; and whoever imagines that of two persons I love one as dearly as the other, and that they love each other and me as much as I love them, he multiplies into a society the most single and indivisible of things,[1] of which a single instance is the hardest thing in the world to find.

(*a*) The rest of this tale agrees entirely with what I was saying: for Eudamidas bestows upon his friends the boon and favour of using them for his need; he makes them inheritors of that liberality of his which consists in placing in their hands the means of benefitting him. And unquestionably the strength of friendship manifests itself much more abundantly in his act than in that of Aretheus. To conclude, these conditions are inconceivable to him who has never experienced them, (*c*) and they lead me to praise exceedingly the reply of the young soldier to Cyrus, who asked him for how much he would sell a horse with which he had just won the prize of the race, and whether he would exchange him for a kingdom: "Surely not, sire; but I would readily part with him to gain thereby a friend, if I could find a man worthy of such fellowship."[2] Well did he say, "if I could find"; for one easily finds men fit for a superficial acquaintance; but in this other sort, in which one deals from the deepest depths of his heart, and without any reserve, certainly it is essential that all the parts that come into play[3] be perfectly spotless and reliable.

In those connections which hold by but one end we have only to take heed of the imperfections which particularly

[1] *La chose la plus une et unie.*

[2] See Xenophon, *Cyropædeia*, VIII, 3.

[3] *Tous les ressorts.*

concern that end. It can not matter of what religion my physician is, and my lawyer; that consideration has nothing in common with the duties of the friendship which they owe me. And in the domestic relations which those who serve me form with me, I take the same position: I question little about a footman's chastity; I enquire if he is diligent; and am not so anxious about a gambling muleteer as about one wanting in strength, or about a profane cook as about an ignorant one. I do not busy myself with saying what should be done in the world, — enough other people busy themselves about that, — but what I do.

Mihi sic usus est; tibi, ut opus est facto, face.[1]

In the familiar intercourse of the table, I ask for the agreeable, not the discreet; in bed, beauty before virtue; in the companionship of thoughts, cleverness, even without integrity.[2]

(*a*) Just as he who was found bestriding a stick, in play with his children,[3] begged the man who caught him at it to say nothing about it until he was himself a father, thinking that the emotion which would then be born in his heart would make him a just judge of such an act, I also should desire to speak to people who have experienced what I describe; but knowing how far removed from the ordinary wont such a friendship is, and how rare it is, I do not expect to find any good judge of it. For the discourses that antiquity has left us on this subject seem to me cold [4] in comparison with the feeling that I have of it; and on this point the facts surpass the very precepts of philosophy: —

Nil ego contulerim jucundo sanus amico.[5]

Old Menander called him happy who had met merely the

[1] Such is my custom; as for you, do as you have occasion. — Terence, *Heautontimorumenos*, I, 1.28.

[2] *A la familiarité de la table j'associe le plesant, non le prudant; au lict la beauté avant la bonté; en la societé du discours, la suffisance, voire sans la preud'homie.*

[3] See Plutarch, *Life of Agesilaus*.

[4] *Laches*.

[5] So long as I am in my senses, I shall find nothing to compare with an agreeable friend. — Horace, *Satires*, I, 5.44.

ghost of a friend.[1] He was surely justified in saying this, even if he had made essay of it; for, in truth, if I compare all the rest of my life, — although by God's mercy I have found it sweet and easy, and, save for the loss of such a friend, exempt from any poignant grief, full of contentment and tranquillity of mind, having been satisfied with[2] my natural and original advantages, without seeking others, — if, I say, I compare it all with the four years that it was given to me to enjoy the sweet companionship and society of that lofty soul,[3] it is but smoke, it is but a dark and mournful night. Since the day I lost him, —

quem semper acerbum,
Semper honoratum (sic, Dii, voluistis), habebo,[4] —

I do but drag out a languishing existence, and even the pleasures that offer themselves to me, instead of consoling me, redouble my regret for his loss. We halved every thing; it seems to me that I steal from him his share.

Nec fas esse ulla me voluptate hic frui
Decrevi, tantisper dum ille abest meus particeps.[5]

I was formerly so enured and accustomed to be second in every thing, that it seems to me now that I am only half a man.

(*b*) Illam meæ si partem animæ tulit
Maturior vis, quid moror altera,
Nec charus æque, nec superstes
Integer? Ille dies utramque
Duxit ruinam.[6]

[1] See Plutarch, *On Brotherly Love.*

[2] *Ayant prins en payement.*

[3] *De ce personnage.*

[4] [The day] which will ever be bitter to me, ever sacred; such, O Gods! has been your will. — Virgil, *Æneid*, V, 49.

[5] I have resolved that here I may enjoy no pleasure while he, my comrade, is absent. — Terence, *Heautontimorumenos*, I, 1.97. Montaigne adapted the text to suit his purpose.

[6] If an untimely death has taken away the half of my life, what cause have I, the other half, to linger on, being not so dear, and itself impaired? That day struck down both of us. — Horace, *Odes*, II, 17.5. Here again, Montaigne has modified the text.

(*a*) There is no act or thought of mine in which I do not miss him, even as it would have been with him for me; for even as he surpassed me infinitely in every other ability and power, so did he in the virtue of friendship.

Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus
Tam chari capitis.[1]

O misero frater adempte mihi!
Omnia tecum una perierunt gaudia nostra,
Quæ tuus in vita dulcis alebat amor.
Tu mea, tu moriens fregisti commoda, frater;
Tecum una tota est nostra sepulta anima,
Cujus ego interitu tota de mente fugavi
Hæc studia atque omnes delicias animi.
Alloquar? audiero nunquam tua verba loquentem?
Nunquam ego te, vita frater amabilior,
Aspiciam posthac? At certe semper amabo.[2]

But let us listen a while to this youth of sixteen.[3]

Because I have learned that this work has since been brought to light, and to an evil end, by those who seek to disturb and change the form of our government, heedless whether they will improve it, and that they have mixed it with other writings of their own make, I have given up placing it here. And that the author's memory may not by this [publication] be wronged in the minds of those who have not had the opportunity to know his opinions and his actions at close quarters, I inform them that this subject was treated

[1] What shame, what bounds can there be in grief for so dear a head? — Horace, *Odes*, I, 24.1.

[2] O brother, snatched from me to my grief! With thee have departed all the joys which in life thy sweet love nourished. Thou, O brother, thou hast destroyed by thy death all my comforts; with thee my whole soul is entombed. Since thy death I have wholly shunned the study of books and all delights of the mind. — Shall I speak with thee hereafter? Am I never again to hear thee talk? Shall I never again behold thee, O brother dearer than life? But surely I shall forever love thee.— Catullus, LXVIII, 20; LXV, 9. Montaigne made considerable changes in the text.

[3] *Dixhuict* in 1580–1588. Montaigne originally intended to add La Boëtie's tract, *La Servitude Volontaire*, at the end of this chapter, but abandoned that purpose for the reason given in the next paragraph.

by him in his boyhood, by way of practice only, as a familiar subject which had been travelled over a thousand times in books. I make no doubt that he believed what he wrote, for he was conscientious enough not to deceive, even carelessly; and I know furthermore that, if he had had his choice, he would have liked better to be born at Venice than at Sarlac, and with good reason. But he had another maxim, supremely imprinted on his mind — to obey, and submit most scrupulously to, the laws under which he was born. There was never a better citizen, or one more devoted to the repose of his country or more hostile to the commotions and innovations of his time: he would much rather have employed his ability in quieting them than in supplying the wherewithal to rouse them more. His mind was modelled on the pattern of other ages than this.

Now, in exchange for this serious work, I will substitute another, produced at the same period of his life, but more vivacious and blithe.[1]

CHAPTER XXIX

NINE-AND-TWENTY SONNETS OF ETIENNE DE LA BOËTIE

We have here only a paragraph of introduction of his friend's verses, addressed by Montaigne to Madame de Grammont. This dedication, which appeared in 1580, was probably written in 1576.

Madame de Grammont was known as *la belle Corisande d'Andouins*. She was by birth Diane, vicomtesse de Louvigny; she married in 1567 Philibert, comte de Grammont et de Guiche. He was killed at the siege of La Fère in 1580. Montaigne noted in his *Ephemerides* "6 août, l'an 1580 mourût au siege de la fere, môsr de gramôt qui m'étoit fort amy; qui avoit été frapé d'un coup de piece 4 jours auparaûnt, moi etât au d'siege." In the Essay "Of Diversion" (Book III, chapter 4), he says: "I went with several other of his friends to conduct to Soissons the body of monsieur de Gramont from the siege of la Fere, where he was killed."

[1] In the earlier editions, including 1588, the following sentence appeared: *Ce sont 29. sonnets que le sieur de Poiferré homme d'affaires et d'entendement, qui le connoissoit long temps avant moy, a retrouvé par fortune chez luy, parmy quelques autres papiers, et me les vient d'envoyer; dequoy je luy suis tres-obligé, et souhaiterois que d'autres qui detiennent plusieurs lopins de ses escris, par-cy, par-là, en fissent de mesmes.*

To Madame de Grammont, comtesse de Guissen

MADAME, I offer you nothing of my own, either because it is already yours, or because I find in it nothing worthy of you. But it is my desire that these verses, wheresoever they might find themselves, should have your name at their head, for the honour it will be to them to have the noble Corisande d'Andouins for their guide. This gift seems to me to be appropriate for you because there are few ladies in France who are better judges of poetry, or who make use of it more fitly than you; and since there is no one who can give it life and spirit as you do by those beautiful and rich tones with which among a million other charms, nature has endowed you. Madame, these verses deserve to be highly valued by you; for you will agree with me that none have come out of Gascony which had more originality and delightsomeness, and which testified to having come from a more opulent hand. And be not jealous because you have only the remainder of what some time ago I published [1] and dedicated to Monsieur de Foix, your honoured kinsman; for truly these have an indefinable something more vivid and more ebullient, as he wrote them in his lustiest youth and inflamed by a fine and noble passion, about which some day, Madame, I will whisper in your ear. The others [2] were written later, for the love of his wife, when he was arranging his marriage, and they have already an indescribable touch of marital coolness. And I am one of those who maintain that poetry is never so charming as when treating a wanton and lawless subject.

(*c*) These verses may be seen elsewhere.[3]

[1] Referring to the volume of *Vers François* of La Boëtie, published by Montaigne in 1572.

[2] That is, the verses in the volume referred to in the preceding note.

[3] The 29 sonnets were printed in all editions down to and including 1588. In place of the above sentence written by Montaigne on the Bordeaux copy of 1588, on which he struck out the sonnets, we find in 1595 the following: *Ces vingt-neuf sonnetz d'Estienne de la Boëtie, qui estoient mis en ce lieu, ont esté despuis imprimez avec ses œuvres.* The edition of the sonnets which led Montaigne to omit them here has never been discovered.

CHAPTER XXX

OF MODERATION

THE motto for this chapter might be taken from Molière's *Misanthrope:*

> La parfaite raison fuit toute extremité
> Et veut que l'on soit sage avec sobrieté.

"Moderation" was the law of Montaigne's life, but he treats of it without any special eloquence or force, and with only limited illustrations. He repeats here in other words the observation he has already made in the fifteenth Essay, that all virtues, if too extravagantly practised, may become vices.[1]

The quotation from St. Paul he here makes use of was one of the many inscriptions in his library. In 1775 the question was proposed by the French Academy, as the subject for a prize of eloquence: "En quoi consiste l'esprit philosophique conformément à ces paroles: *Non plus sapere quam oportet sapere?*" This question has not yet been answered. Is it asked as often as it might be?

We find here one of the few *cheerless* passages of the Essays, that which begins: "Is not man a pitiful creature?" a cheerlessness occasioned by facts existing far more in Montaigne's day than, happily, in our own. From this "impression" we pass on rather disconnectedly to the matter of human sacrifice — with a word about "the new regions discovered in our time, still pure and undefiled in comparison with our own." The Essay concludes with a story about Cortez.

AS if our touch were infection, we by our handling corrupt things which in themselves are beautiful and good. We can lay hold of virtue in such wise that it will become thereby vicious, if we embrace it with too eager and violent a passion. Those who say that there is never excess in virtue, because it is no longer virtue if there be excess, play with words.

> Insani sapiens nomen ferat, æquus iniqui,
> Ultra quam satis est virtutem si petat ipsam.[2]

[1] The opposite view has also been maintained. "Jacobi," says Emerson, "refusing all measure of right and wrong except the determination of the private spirit, remarks that there is no crime but has sometimes been a virtue." ("The Transcendentalist.") It is a pity that this thesis did not occur to Montaigne; one would like to see what he would have made of it.

[2] The wise man would deserve to be called a fool, and the just man unjust, if he seek virtue itself to excess. — Horace, *Epistles*, I, 6.15.

This is a subtle consideration of philosophy. It is possible both to love virtue overmuch, and to be excessive in a right action. To this point of view are conformed the divine words: Be no more virtuous than is needful, but be soberly virtuous.[1] (*c*) I have seen a man of high rank [2] injure his reputation for devoutness by exhibiting himself as devout beyond all examples of men of his quality. I love temperate and moderate natures. Lack of moderation, even in what is right, while it does not offend me, amazes me, and it perplexes me to give a name to it. Neither the mother of Pausanias, who gave the first directions and brought the first stone for her son's death,[3] nor the dictator Posthumius, who caused his son to be put to death, whom the ardour of youth had caused to dash successfully upon the enemy a little in advance of his time [4] — neither of the two seems to me so right as strange; and I prefer neither to counsel nor to follow a virtue so barbarous and which costs so dear. The archer who overshoots the mark fails equally with him who does not reach it; and my eyes trouble me as much in looking up suddenly toward a bright light as in looking down into the darkness. Callicles, in Plato, says [5] that philosophy carried to an extreme is harmful, and counsels us not to enter into it beyond the limits of profitableness; practised in moderation, it is agreeable and advantageous, but it makes a man uncivilised and unsound, scornful of common religions and laws, a foe to social intercourse, a foe to merely human pleasures, incapable of any political function and of giving aid to others or to himself — a man to be cuffed with impunity. He speaks the truth; for in its excess it enslaves our natural freedom, and turns us aside, by too great refinement,

[1] See *Epistle to the Romans*, XII, 3: *Dico enim . . . omnibus qui sunt inter vos, non plus sapere quam oportet sapere, sed sapere ad sobrietatem.* — For I say . . . to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly.

[2] *Tel grand.* Probably King Henri III.

[3] That is, the first stone for walling up the door of the Temple, in which he had taken refuge. See Diodorus Siculus, XI, 45; Cornelius Nepos, *Pausanias*, V.

[4] See Diodorus Siculus, XII, 19; Valerius Maximus, II, 7.6. Livy (IV, 29, and VIII, 7) denies this.

[5] See the *Gorgias*.

from the straight and level road that Nature has marked out for us.

(*a*) Our friendship for our wives is most legitimate; yet theology does not fail to curb and restrain it. I think that I read long ago in St. Thomas,[1] in a passage where he condemns the marriage of kinsfolk in the prohibited degrees, this reason among others — that there is danger that the friendship that a man may have for such a wife may be extravagant; for if conjugal affection exists entire and perfect, as it ought, and if it be surcharged with the affection due to the blood-tie,[2] there is no doubt that that addition carries such a husband beyond the bounds of reason.

The branches of learning,[3] like theology and philosophy, which regulate the morals of mankind, enter into all things. There is no act so intimate and secret that it evades their knowledge and jurisdiction. (*c*) Very ignorant are they who censure their liberty. Ce sont les femmes qui communiquent tant qu'on veut leurs pieces a garsoner; a medeciner la honte le defend. (*a*) Je veux donc, de leur part, apprendre cecy aux maris, (*c*) s'il s'en treuve qui y soient trop acharnez: (*a*) c'est que les plaisirs mesmes qu'ils ont a l'acointance de leurs femmes sont reprouvez, si la moderation n'y est observée; et qu'il y a dequoy faillir en licence et desbordement en ce subject-là, comme en un subject illegitime. (*c*) Ces encheriments deshontez que la chaleur premiere nous suggere en ce jeu sont, non indecemment sulemant, mais dommageablement emploiez envers nos femmes. Qu'elles apprennent l'impudence au moins d'une autre main. Elles sont toujours assez esveillees pour nostre besoin. Je ne n'y suis servi que de l'instruction naturelle et simple.

(*a*) Marriage is a religious and godly union; that is why the pleasure we derive from it should be a sustained, serious pleasure, combined with some austerity; it should be a somewhat prudent and conscientious pleasure. Et parce que sa principale fin c'est la generation, il y en a qui mettent en doubte si, lors que nous sommes sans l'esperance de ce fruit, comme quand elles sont hors d'aage, ou enceinte,

[1] See the *Secunda Secundæ*, question 154, art. 9.
[2] *La parantelle.*
[3] *Les sciences.*

il est permis d'en rechercher l'embrassement. C'est un homicide a la mode de Platon.[1] (*b*) Certaines nations, (*c*) et entre autres la Mahumetane,[2] (*b*) abominent la conjonction avec les femmes enceintes; plusieurs aussi, avec celles qui ont leurs flueurs. Zenobia[3] ne recevoit son mary que pour une charge, et, cela fait, elle le laissoit courir tout le temps de sa conception, lui donnant lors seulement loy de recommencer; brave et genereux exemple de mariage.

(*c*) C'est de quelque poete disetteux et affamé de ce deduit[4] que Platon emprenta cette narration que Juppiter fit a sa femme une si chalereuse charge un jour que, ne pouvant avoir patience qu'elle eut gaigné son lit, il la versa sur le planchier, et, par la vehemence du plaisir, oublia les resolutions grandes et importantes qu'il venoit de prendre aveq les autres dieux en sa court celeste; se vantant qu'il l'avoit trouve aussi bon ce coup-là, que lors que premierement il la depucela à cachette de leurs parens. (*a*) Les Roys de Perse[5] appelloient leurs femmes à la compaignie de leurs festins; mais quand le vin venoit à les echauffer en bon escient et qu'il falloit tout à fait lascher la bride à la volupté, ils les renvoient en leur privé, pour ne les faire participantes de leurs appetits immoderez, et faisoient venir, en leur lieu, des femmes ausquelles ils n'eussent point cette obligation de respect.

(*b*) All kinds of pleasures and gratifications are not fitly bestowed on all sorts of men. Epaminondas had ordered a young debauchee to be imprisoned; Pelopidas begged that he might be set free, as a favour to himself; he[6] denied that to him, but granted it to a wench of his who also begged it, saying that it was a gratification due to a mistress, not to a captain. (*c*) Sophocles, when associated with Pericles in the prætorship,[7] accidentally saw a handsome boy pass by. "Oh! what a handsome boy that is!" he said to Pericles.

[1] See Plato, *Laws*, book VIII.

[2] See G. Postel, *Histoire des Turkes;* Gomara, *Histoire des Indes*, III, 18.

[3] See Trebellius Pollio, XXX.

[4] See Homer, *Iliad*, XIV, 294; Plato, *Republic*, book III.

[5] See Plutarch, *Marriage Precepts*.

[6] Epaminondas. See Plutarch, *Political Precepts*.

[7] See Cicero, *De Off.*, I, 40.

"That saying," said Pericles, "would be blameless for another than a prætor, who should have not only chaste hands, but chaste eyes." (*a*) The Emperor Ælius Verus replied to his wife, when she complained of his allowing himself to love other women, that he did it from conscientious motives, because marriage was a title of honour and dignity, not of wanton and licentious concupiscence.[1] (*c*) And our ancient religious authors [2] speak with all respect of a wife who repudiated her husband because she was unwilling to yield to his too licentious and immoderate passion. (*a*) In short, there is no pleasure so lawful that excess and lack of moderation in it are not blameworthy.

But speaking in good conscience, is not man a pitiful creature? It is hardly in his power, from his natural condition, to enjoy a single pure and unalloyed pleasure; yet he takes pains to lessen this power by precepts; he is not pitiable enough if he does not add to his wretchedness by craft and study.

(*b*) Fortunæ miseras auximus arte vias.[3]

(*c*) Human wisdom plays the sage very foolishly [4] in exercising herself to diminish the number and the charm of the pleasures which belong to us, while she shows kindness and vigilance in employing her skill in smoothing and colouring our ills,[5] and lightening our perception of them. Had I been in command, I would have chosen a more natural path, and one more direct and godly; and perchance I might have made myself strong enough not to go too far.

(*a*) What of the fact that our doctors, spiritual and corporeal, as if they had conspired together, find no road to a cure, nor any remedy for the ills of body and mind save by anguish, pain, and trouble. Vigils, fastings, hair-shirts, distant and solitary exile, perpetual imprisonment, scourgings, and other afflictions, were introduced for that purpose; and

[1] See Spartianus, *Ælius Verus*.

[2] Eusebius and Nicephorus.

[3] We artificially make worse the painful paths of fortune. — Propertius, III, 7.32.

[4] *Faict bien sottement l'ingenieuse.*

[5] *Comme elle faict favorablement et industrieusement d'employer ses artifices a nous peigner et farder les maux.*

under such conditions that they are genuine afflictions, and are attended by poignant suffering; (*b*) not as happened with one Gallio, who having been banished to the island of Lesbos, it became known at Rome that he was enjoying himself there, and that what had been allotted to him as a punishment had become a source of pleasure; wherefore they determined to recall him to his wife and his own house, and ordered him to remain there, so as to adapt his punishment to his state of mind.[1] (*a*) For to him whose health and spirits were improved by fasting, or to whom fish was more appetising than meat, these would be no salutary prescriptions; no more than, in the other kind of medicine, drugs which have no effect on him who takes them with liking and pleasure. Bitterness and distaste are conditions that facilitate their operation. The constitution which welcomed rhubarb as familiar would vitiate its use; we must take something that offends our stomach, to cure it; and here the common rule fails, that things are cured by their opposites: for one ill cures another.[2] (*b*) This belief is in some sort related to that other so ancient one, the thought that heaven and nature were gratified by our massacring and murdering, which was universally included in all religions. (*c*) Even in our fathers' days Amurat,[3] at the taking of Isthmia, sacrificed six hundred Greek youths to his father's soul, that their blood might serve as propitiation, in expiation of the sins of the departed. (*b*) And in the new regions discovered in our time, still pure and undefiled in comparison with our own, this custom is received everywhere to some extent: all their idols are sprinkled with human blood, not without divers instances of horrible cruelty. The victims are burned alive, and when half roasted, are taken from the bed of coals, in order to have their heart and entrails torn out. Others, even women, are flayed alive, and with their bloody skins others are clothed and disguised. And not less are there examples of endurance and resolution: for the poor creatures who are to be sacrificed, old men, women, and children, go about for

[1] See Tacitus, *Annals*, VI, 3.

[2] The chapter ended here in the editions before 1588.

[3] Amurath II. See Chalcondylas, *History of the Fall of the Grecian Empire*, VII, 4.

some days beforehand, asking alms for the offering of their sacrifice,[1] and present themselves to be butchered, singing and dancing with the spectators. The ambassadors of the King of Mexico, impressing upon Ferdinand Cortez their master's greatness, after they had told him that he had thirty vassals, each of whom could assemble a hundred thousand fighting men, and that he dwelt in the most beautiful and strongest city under heaven, added that he had to sacrifice fifty thousand men to the gods each year. In truth, it is said, he waged constant war against certain great neighbouring nations, not only to train the youth of the country, but chiefly to have the wherewithal to supply his sacrifices with prisoners of war. Elsewhere, in a certain district, by way of welcome to this same Cortez, they sacrificed fifty men, all at once. I will tell this strange story also: some of these peoples, having been beaten by him,[2] sent to him by way of recognition, and to seek his friendship; the messengers presented him with gifts of three sorts, in this wise: "Lord, here are five slaves; if thou art a fierce god that dost feed on flesh and blood, eat them, and we will bring thee more; if thou art a kindly god, here are incense and feathers; if thou art a man, take these birds and fruits."[3]

CHAPTER XXXI

OF CANNIBALS

It has been remarked (by M. Gilbert Chinard) that this chapter is one of those in which most definitely appears a desire on Montaigne's part to give a lesson to his contemporaries, to urge them to free themselves from their prejudices, to listen to the voice of our *grande et puissante mère Nature*. And it may be added that it is notable that these pages are composed with a closer connection of ideas than is usual with Montaigne. The connecting thread of thought, often so slight with him, is here clearly perceptible throughout.

This Essay, like that on Education, is curiously precursory of the beliefs of Rousseau. It is the praise, not of a state of *savagery*, but of a

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[1] That is, to defray the cost of their sacrifice. See Gomara, *Histoire Générale des Indes*, II, 7.

[2] Cortez.

[3] See Gomara, *Don Fernando Cortes*.

state alien to our conditions of civilisation — a state which Montaigne is inclined to consider — as Rousseau does — a state of *nature*. Montaigne does not call it so; and indeed he is less interested, evidently, about this point than in the fact that "every one calls *barbarie* whatever is not his own custom."

Montaigne's thoughts had been turned in this direction by the comparatively recent discovery of America, more especially by the really recent interest of the French in South America — which they called *la France antartique*.

A few dates may be helpful in enabling us to enter into the views held by Montaigne and his contemporaries.

It should be remembered that Columbus died (in 1506) in the firm belief that his discoveries were parts of Asia; and it was not till 1513 that the Pacific Ocean was made known (by Balboa), a discovery that Montaigne seems not to have appreciated. The conquest of Mexico, by Cortez, was in 1519–1521, and that of Peru, by Pizarro, in 1531–1532. We shall see later (in the Essay "Of Coaches") how much Montaigne had occupied himself with the conditions of the civilisations thus made known — which were called barbarisms.

M. Gilbert Chinard in an interesting chapter on Montaine as "ung defenseur des Indiens," in his *L'Exotisme Americain* (1911), remarks on the essential difference of tone between this Essay on Cannibals and that on Coaches, written many years later. M. Chinard expresses a somewhat strange surprise that Montaigne, in this earlier Essay, says nothing of the atrocities of the Spaniards toward the French, and he offers, as a possible explanation, a belief that Montaigne was opposed by his principles to all colonial enterprises, and was convinced that his fellow countrymen had no right over Brazil, and that those who had gone thither as fortune-seekers had had only the luck they deserved.

Later, the moral problem created by the conquest of America interested him; and, while, in this first Essay, we perceive only the results of his curiosity, his love of investigation, his liking for picturesque details, in the later one we feel that his conscience has been touched; he considers the matter from a wider point of view, and he puts himself clearly on the side of the original possessors of the country against their barbarous conquerors, as a defender of the Right and of Humanity.

The peoples with whom Montaigne chiefly concerned himself in this Essay were those of Brazil, which was discovered in 1550 — first by the Spaniards, and a few months later by the Portuguese, who obtained the mastery. In 1555–1560 the amiral de Coligny made an attempt to found a Protestant settlement in America. Chevalier Nicolaus Durard de Villegaignon in 1555 led two ships to Brazil, and founded a colony on an island in the Bay of Rio de Janeiro. Geneva sent fourteen missionaries thither, but Villegaignon suddenly joined the Catholic Church, and his defection ruined the colony. Many of the settlers returned to France in 1557, — when Montaigne was twenty-four years old, — and probably later the particular wanderer came back, from whom Montaigne says he gained much of the information he here dwells on. It is to be feared that

the remarks Montaigne makes on the value of his testimony, and that of the "seamen and merchants" he brought to Montaigne, have not the firmest foundation; but the interest of the Essay lies not in the facts Montaigne believed, but in the inferences he draws from them. As M. Levaux has said: "It must be acknowledged that Montaigne has singularly amplified what a man whom he describes as a 'simple, plain fellow' could have related to him. It is an interpreted narrative; what Montaigne reproved others for doing, he here himself does."

What more natural! And how Montaigne would have liked to hold up to the light this bit of human nature in himself, if he had chanced to perceive it! Again we feel that he writes as a *poet*, not as an historian, and not quite as a philosopher. And this Essay has a link with poetry that gives it the greatest possible extraneous interest that it could possess. Shakespeare read it, and with such warmth of interest and appreciation that he quoted it. Nothing could be more delightful to the lover of Montaigne than that in "The Tempest," — one of the most beautiful of the plays, one most closely connected with Shakespeare personally, and written in the noblest maturity of his mind, — nothing could be more delightful, I say, than to find imbedded in it a long quotation from Montaigne (Act II, scene 1). Shakespeare took it quite certainly from the translation of Florio.[1]

M. Villey remarks: "Much was written in the sixteenth century about the cannibals. It is interesting to examine carefully the assertions of Montaigne in relation to those of his contemporaries. Besides the great cosmographs of Thevet, of Belleforest, and of Munster (we know that this last was in Montaigne's library), and the great histories of the Indies, like that of Lopez de Gomara, it is particularly instructive to read the narratives of the companions of Villegaignon: that of André Thevet, 'Les Singularetez de la France antartique' (1563); and the relation of Jean de Léry, 'Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre de Brésil, autrement dit Amérique' (1578)."

WHEN King Pyrrhus invaded Italy, after he had surveyed the army that the Romans had sent out against him, drawn up in battle array, "I know not," he said, "what barbarians these are" (for the Greeks so called all foreign nations), "but the disposition of this army that I see is in no wise barbarian."[2] The Greeks said the same of the army that Flaminius led into

[1] It is to be observed that Shakespeare read the word "idle" as referring to *men;* in Montaigne "oisives" refers to *occupations*. It may be mentioned, by the way, that Florio's volume is the only book which we certainly know to have belonged to Shakespeare. The British Museum has a copy with his autograph on the fly-leaf. That was published in 1603, and "The Tempest" was written in 1610.

[2] See Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus*.

their country;[1] (*c*) and Philip, when he saw from a little hill the order and arrangement of the Roman camp in his kingdom under Publius Sulpicius Galba.[2] (*a*) Thus we see how we should beware of adhering to common opinions, and that we must weigh them by the test of reason, not by common report.[3]

I had with me for a long time a man who had lived ten or twelve years in that other world which has been discovered in our time in the region where Villegaignon made land, and which he christened Antarctic France. This discovery of a boundless country seems to be worth consideration. I do not know whether I can be assured that some other may not hereafter be found, so many greater personages having been deceived about this one. I fear that our eyes may be greater than our stomachs,[4] and that we have more curiosity than capacity. We grasp at every thing, but clutch nothing but wind. Plato speaks of Solon narrating that he learned from the priests of the city of Sais in Egypt that in times past, and before the Deluge, there was a large island called Atlantidis, just at the mouth of the Strait of Gibraltar, which was of greater extent than Africa and Asia together, and that the kings of that country — who not only possessed that island, but had extended their dominion so far on the continent that they held the breadth of Africa as far as Egypt, and the length of Europe as far as Tuscany — undertook to stride into Asia and to subdue all the nations on the shores of the Mediterranean as far as the Euxine;[5] and to this end they traversed all Spain, Gaul, and Italy, even to Greece, where the Athenians resisted them; but, some time later, the Athenians and they and their island were swallowed up by the Deluge.[6] It is very probable that that im-

[1] See Plutarch, *Life of Flaminius*, III. But Plutarch says it of Flaminius himself, not of his army.

[2] See Livy, XXXI, 34.

[3] *Par la* voye *de la raison, non par la* voix *commun.*

[4] In 1580–1588: *Comme on dict, et le dit-on de ceux, ausquels l'appetit et la faim font plus desirer de viande, qu'ils n'en peuvent empocher; je crains aussi* (omitted in the *Édition Municipale*).

[5] *Le golfe de la mer Majour;* that is, the Black Sea.

[6] See the *Timæus*, XXII, XXIV, XXV. Cf. Benzoni's *Storia del Monde Nuovo*, translated into French by Chauveton.

mense inundation made strange changes in the inhabited places of the earth, as it is thought that the sea cut off Sicily from Italy, —

(*b*) Hæc loca, vi quondam et vasta convulsa ruina,
Dissiluisse ferunt, cum protinus utraque tellus
Una foret,[1] —

(*a*) Cyprus from Syria, and the island of Negropont from the mainland of Bœotia; and elsewhere joined lands that were formerly separate, filling with mud and sand the channels between them, —

sterilisque diu palus aptaque remis
Vicinas urbes alit, et grave sentit aratrum.[2]

But there is no great likelihood that this new world that we have just discovered is that island; for it almost touched Spain, and it would be an incredible effect of the inundation to have moved it away, as it is, more than twelve hundred leagues; besides which, the explorations of modern navigators have almost made sure that this is not an island, but mainland, connected with the East Indies on one side, and elsewhere with the countries that lie under the two poles; or, if divided from them, it is by so narrow a passage that it is not thereby entitled to be called an island. (*b*) It seems as if there may be motions in those great bodies as in our own, (*c*) some natural, others irregular. (*b*) When I see the encroachment that my river Dordogne is making on its right bank, in my own day, and how much it has gained in twenty years, and has undermined the foundations of several buildings, I see clearly that it is an unusual disturbance; for if the river had always so done, or if it were always so to do, the face of the world would be subverted. But they[3] are subject to changes: sometimes they overflow on one side, sometimes on the other; sometimes they keep within their banks. I am not speaking of sudden inundations, of which

[1] They say that these lands were once torn violently asunder in a great convulsion; till then the two lands had been but one. — Virgil, *Æneid*, III, 414.

[2] Long a sterile fen, fit for the oar, it now feeds the neighbouring towns and feels the weight of the plough. — Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 65.

[3] That is, rivers.

we can lay our hand on the causes. In Medoc, along the sea-coast, my brother, Sieur d'Arsac, saw an estate of his buried under the sand which the sea threw upon it; the roofs of some buildings are still visible; his revenues and domain are transformed into very poor pastures. The people of the place say that for some time past the sea pushes on so effectually toward them, that they have lost four leagues of land. These sands are her harbingers; (*c*) and we see great moving sand dunes that march half a league before her and steadily advance.

(*a*) The other assertion of ancient times with which it is attempted to connect this discovery, is in Aristotle — that is, if that little treatise of *Unheard-of Wonders* [1] be his. He there relates that certain Carthaginians, having started across the Atlantic Sea from the Strait of Gibraltar, and having sailed a long while, finally discovered a large, fertile island, well covered with forests, and watered by broad and deep rivers, far distant from any mainland; and that they, and others after them, attracted by the bounty and fertility of the soil, went thither with their wives and children, and set up their habitation there. The lords of Carthage, seeing that their country was being gradually depopulated, expressly forbade, upon pain of death, that any more of their people should go thither, and expelled these new settlers, fearing, so it is said, that, as time passed, they might so multiply that they would supplant themselves,[2] and ruin their state. This narrative of Aristotle's agrees no better[3] with our newly-discovered territories.

This man that I had [4] was a simple, plain fellow, which is a nature likely to give true testimony; for intelligent persons notice more things and scrutinise them more carefully; but they comment on them; and to make their interpretation of value and win belief for it, they can not refrain from

[1] This is taken practically word for word from Chauveton's translation of Benzoni's history, just cited, and is said to be a literal translation of the treatise περὶ Θαυμάσιων Ακουσμάτων, sometimes ascribed to Aristotle; it may be found on page 66 of the Teubner Edition of Aristotle's *De Plantis*, etc.

[2] That is, the "lords."

[3] Than the Atlantis fable. See page 271.

[4] See page 271.

altering the facts a little. They never represent things to you just as they are: they shape them and disguise them according to the aspect which they have seen them bear; and to win faith in their judgement and incline you to trust it, they readily help out the matter on one side, lengthen it, and amplify it. It needs a man either very truthful or so ignorant that he has no material wherewith to construct and give verisimilitude to false conceptions, and one who is wedded to nothing. My man was such a one; and, besides, he on divers occasions brought to me several sailors and traders whom he had known on his travels. So I am content with this information, without enquiring what the cosmographers say about it. We need topographers who would give us a detailed description of the places where they have been. But when they have the advantage over us of having seen Palestine, they desire to enjoy the privilege of telling us news about all the rest of the world. I could wish that every one would write what he knows and as much as he knows, not about one subject alone, but about all others; for one may have some special knowledge or experience as to the nature of a river or a fountain, who about other things knows only what every one knows. He will undertake, however, in order to give currency to that little scrap of knowledge, to write on the whole science of physics. From this fault spring many grave disadvantages.

Now, to return to what I was talking of, I think that there is nothing barbaric or uncivilised in that nation, according to what I have been told, except that every one calls "barbarism" whatever he is not accustomed to. As, indeed, it seems that we have no other criterion [1] of truth and of what is reasonable than the example and type of the opinions and customs of the country to which we belong: therein [to us] always is the perfect religion, the perfect political system, the perfect and achieved usage in all things. They are wild men,[2] just as we call those fruits wild [2] which Nature has produced unaided and in her usual course; whereas, in truth, it is those that we have altered by our skill and removed from the common kind which we ought rather to call wild. In the former the real and most useful and natural

[1] *Mire.* [2] *Sauvages.*

virtues are alive and vigorous — we have vitiated them in the latter, adapting them to the gratification of our corrupt taste; (*c*) and yet nevertheless the special savour and delicacy of divers uncultivated fruits of those regions seems excellent even to our taste in comparison with our own. (*a*) It is not reasonable that art should gain the preëminence over our great and puissant mother Nature. We have so overloaded the beauty and richness of her works by our contrivances that we have altogether smothered her. Still, truly, whenever she shines forth unveiled,[1] she wonderfully shames our vain and trivial undertakings.

(*b*) Et veniunt ederæ sponte sua melius,
Surgit et in solis formosior arbutus antris,
Et volucres nulla dulcius arte canunt.[2]

(*a*) All our efforts can not so much as reproduce the nest of the tiniest birdling, its contexture, its beauty, and its usefulness;[3] nay, nor the web of the little spider. (*c*) All things, said Plato, are produced either by nature, or by chance, or by art; the greatest and most beautiful by one or other of the first two, the least and most imperfect by the last.[4]

(*a*) These nations seem to me, then, wild in this sense, that they have received in very slight degree the external forms of human intelligence, and are still very near to their primitive simplicity. The laws of nature still govern them, very little corrupted by ours; even in such pureness that it sometimes grieves me that the knowledge of this did not come earlier, in the days when there were men who would have known better than we how to judge it. I am sorry that Lycurgus and Plato had not this knowledge; for it seems to me that what we see in intercourse with those nations surpasses not only all the paintings wherewith poetry has embellished the golden age, and all its conceptions in representing a happy condition of mankind, but also the idea and

[1] *Par tout où sa pureté reluit.*

[2] The ivy grows best when wild, and the arbutus springs most beautifully in some lovely cave; birds sing most sweetly without teaching. — Propertius, I, 2.10. Montaigne has changed the true text somewhat.

[3] *L'utilité de son usage.*

[4] See Plato, *Laws*, book X.

aspiration, even, of philosophy. They could not conceive so pure and simple an artlessness as we by experience know it to be; nor could they believe that human society could be carried on with so little artificiality and human unitedness.[1] It is a nation, I will say to Plato, in which there is no sort of traffic, no acquaintance with letters, no knowledge of numbers, no title of magistrate or of political eminence, no custom of service, of wealth, or of poverty, no contracts, no successions, no dividings of property, no occupations except leisurely ones, no respect for any kinship save in common, no clothing, no agriculture, no metals, no use of wine or grain. The very words that signify falsehood, treachery, dissimulation, avarice, envy, slander, forgiveness, are unheard of. How far from such perfection would he find the Republic he imagined: (*c*) *viri a diis recentes*.[2]

(*b*) Hos natura modos primum dedit.[3]

(*a*) For the rest, they live in a country with a most agreeable and pleasant climate;[4] consequently, according to what my witnesses have told me, it is a rare thing to see a sick man there; and they have assured me that any one palsied, or blear-eyed, or toothless, or bent with old age is never to be seen. These people are settled on the sea-shore, and are shut in, landward, by a chain of high mountains, leaving a strip a hundred leagues or thereabouts in width. They have a great abundance of fish and meats, which bear no resemblance to ours, and they eat them without other elaboration[5] than cooking. The first man who rode a horse there, although he had been with them on several other voyages, so terrified them in that guise that they shot him to death with arrows before they could recognise him.

Their buildings are very long and can hold two or three hundred souls; they are built of the bark of large trees, fastened to the earth at one end and resting against and supporting one another at the ridge-pole, after the fashion of

[1] *Soudeure humaine.*
[2] Men recently from the hands of the gods. — Seneca, *Epistle* 90.
[3] These are the first laws that nature gave. — Virgil, *Georgics*, II, 20.
[4] *En une contrée de païs tres-plaisante et bien temperée.*
[5] *Artifice.*

some of our barns, the roofing whereof falls to the ground and serves for side and end walls.[1] They have wood so hard that they cut with it and make swords of it, and gridirons for cooking their meat. Their beds are a cotton web, hung from the roof like those in our ships, each person having his own, for the women lie apart from their husbands. They rise with the sun and eat immediately after rising, for the whole day's need; for they have no other meal than this. They do not drink then, (*b*) as Suidas[2] says of certain Oriental nations who drank when not eating; (*a*) they drink many times during the day, and a great deal. Their beverage is made of some root, and is of the colour of our light wines; they drink it only luke-warm. This beverage will keep only two or three days; it is rather sharp in taste, not at all intoxicating, good for the stomach, and laxative for those who are not accustomed to it; it is a very pleasant drink for those wonted to it. Instead of bread they use a certain substance like preserved coriander. I have tasted it; its flavour is sweetish and rather insipid. The whole day is passed in dancing. The young men go hunting wild animals with bows. A part of the women employ themselves meanwhile in warming their drink, which is their chief duty. Some one of the old men, in the morning, before they begin to eat, counsels the whole collected household,[3] walking from end to end of the building and repeating the same phrase many times, until he has completed the turn (for the buildings are fully a hundred paces in length). He enjoins upon them only two things — valour against the enemy and friendship for their wives. And they never fail, by way of response, to note the obligation that it is their wives who keep their drink warm and well-seasoned for them. There can be seen in many places, and, among others, in my house, the fashion of their beds, of their twisted ropes, of their wooden swords and the wooden armlets with which they protect their wrists in battle, and of the long staves, open at one end, by the sound of which they mark time in their dancing. They are clean-shaven, and they shave much more

[1] *Sert de flanc.*
[2] A Byzantine lexicographer.
[3] *Presche en commun toute la grangée.*

closely than we do, with no other razor than one of wood or stone.

They believe their souls to be immortal, and that they who have deserved well of the gods have their abode in that quarter of the heavens where the sun rises; the accursed, in the Occident. They have I know not what kinds of priests and prophets, who very rarely come among the people, having their abode in the mountains. On their arrival a great festival and solemn assemblage of several villages takes place. (Each building such as I have described is a village, and they are about a French league distant one from another.) The prophet speaks to them in public, inciting them to virtue and to their duty; but their whole moral teaching contains only these two articles: resoluteness in war and affection for their wives. He prophesies things to come and the results they may hope for from their undertakings; shows them the way toward war, or dissuades them from it; but all this is under the condition that, when he fails to prophesy truly, and if it chances them otherwise than he predicted to them, he is chopped into a thousand pieces if they catch him, and condemned as a false prophet. For this reason, he who has once erred is never seen again. (*c*) Divination is a gift of God; that is why the misuse of it should be a punishable imposture. Among the Scythians, when the soothsayers failed in their venture, they were laid, loaded with chains, in carts filled with brushwood and drawn by oxen, in which they were burned alive.[1] Those who manage things subject to the guidance of human knowledge are excusable if they do with them what they can; but these others, who come cheating us with assurances of an extraordinary power which is beyond our ken — must not they be punished, both because they do not carry out the fact of their promise, and for the foolhardiness of their imposture?

(*a*) They wage wars against the tribes that live on the other side of their mountains, farther inland, to which they go entirely naked, with no other weapons than bows, or wooden swords pointed at the end like the heads of our boar spears. The obstinacy of their combats is wonderful, and they never end save with slaughter and bloodshed; for as to

[1] See Herodotus, IV, 69.

routs and panic, they do not know what those are. Every man brings back as his trophy the head of the foe he has killed, and fastens it at the entrance of his abode. After they have for a long while treated their prisoners well and supplied them with all the comforts they can think of, the head man summons a great assemblage of his acquaintances. He ties a rope to one of the prisoner's arms, (*c*) by the end of which he holds him at a distance of some paces, for fear of being injured by him; (*a*) the other arm he gives to his dearest friend to hold in the same way; and they two, before the assembly, kill him with their swords. That done, they roast him, and all eat him in common and send portions to those of their friends who are absent. This is not, as some think, for sustenance, as the Scythians of old did, but to indicate an uttermost vengeance. And therefore,[1] having observed that the Portuguese, who had allied themselves with their adversaries, made use, when they captured them, of another sort of death for them, which was to bury them to the waist and cast many darts at the rest of their bodies, and hang them afterward, they thought that these people from the other part of the world, who had spread the knowledge of many villainies among their neighbours, and who were much more expert than they in all sorts of evil-doing, would not choose that sort of vengeance without good reason, and that it must be more painful than theirs; and they began to lay aside their old fashion and to follow this one.

I am not sorry that we note the savage horribleness there is in such an action; but indeed I am sorry that, while rightly judging their misdeeds, we are very blind to our own. I think there is more barbarism in eating a living man than a dead one, in rending by torture and racking a body still quick to feel, in slowly roasting it, in giving it to dogs and swine to be torn and eaten (as we have not only read but seen in recent days, not among long-time foes, but among neighbours and fellow citizens, and, what is worse, in the guise of piety and religion), than in roasting it and eating it after it is dead. Chrysippus and Zeno, heads of the Stoic school, did indeed think that there was no harm in using a dead body for any thing demanded by our need, and in de-

[1] *Et qu'il soit ainsi.*

riving sustenance from it;[1] like our ancestors, who, being besieged by Cæsar in the town of Alexia, determined to relieve hunger during the siege by the bodies of old men, women, and other persons useless for fighting.[2]

(*b*) Vascones, fama est, alimentis talibus usi
Produxere animas.[3]

(*a*) And physicians do not fear to make use of it in every sort of way for our health, whether to be applied internally or externally; but there was never found an opinion so unreasonable as to excuse treachery, disloyalty, tyranny, and cruelty, which are our common faults.

We can, then, rightly call them barbarians with respect to the rules of reason, but not with respect to ourselves, who surpass them in every sort of barbarism. Their warfare is wholly noble and honourable, and has as much excuse and beauty as that malady of mankind can have. With them it has no other motive than simply eagerness of prowess.[4] They are not at strife for the conquest of new territories, for they still enjoy that natural fertility which supplies them, without labour and without trouble, with all things necessary, in such abundance that they have no reason to enlarge their boundaries. They are still at that fortunate point of desiring only so much as is ordained by their natural needs: every thing beyond that is superfluous for them. They generally call those of the same age brothers, those younger, children; and the old men are fathers to all the others. They leave to their heirs in common the undivided full possession of property,[5] without other title than that flawless one which Nature gives to her creatures on bringing them into the world. If their neighbours come over the mountains to attack them and win the victory over them, the victor's gain is glory, and the advantage of having proved the superior in valour and prowess; for no otherwise do they give

[1] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Chrysippus*, and *Life of Zeno;* Sextus Empiricus, *Hypotyposes*, III, 24.

[2] See *De Bello Gallico*, VII, 77, 78.

[3] The Gascons, it is said, prolonged life by the use of such food. — Juvenal, XV, 93.

[4] *La seule jalousie de la vertu.*

[5] *Cette pleine possession de biens par indivis.*

heed to the property of the vanquished; and they turn back to their own country, where they lack nothing that is necessary, nor do they lack that great gift of knowing how to enjoy their condition happily and to be content with it. When the turn of the others comes, they do the same; they ask no other ransom of their prisoners than the admission and acknowledgement that they are conquered; but there is not one found in a whole age who does not prefer death rather than to abate, either by manner or by word, a single jot of the grandeur of an invincible courage; not one is seen who does not prefer to be killed rather than merely to ask not to be. They give them every liberty, so that life may be all the dearer to them; and they entertain them usually with threats of their future death, of the torments they will have to suffer, of the preparations that are being made to that end, of the lopping off of their limbs, and of the feast there will be at their expense. All this is done for the sole purpose of extorting from their lips some faltering or downcast word, or of making them long for flight, in order to obtain this advantage of having frightened them and of having shaken their firmness. For, if rightly understood, true victory consists in this single point: —

(*c*) Victoria nulla est
Quam quæ confessos animo quoque subjugat hostes.[1]

The Hungarians, very valorous fighters, did not formerly carry their point beyond reducing their enemy to their mercy; for, having extorted this admission from him, they let him go without injury and without ransom, save, at the most, forcing him to promise not henceforth to take arms against them.[2]

(*a*) We obtain many advantages over our enemies, which are borrowed advantages, not our own. It is the quality of a porter, not of merit, to have stouter arms and legs; it is a lifeless and coporeal faculty to be always ready; it is a stroke of fortune to make our enemy stumble, and to dazzle his eyes by the glare of the sun; it is a trick of art and

[1] That only is victory which forces the foe in his own mind to acknowledge himself conquered. — Claudian, *De Sexto Consulatu Honorii*, 248.

[2] See the *History* of Chalcondylas, V, 9.

knowledge — which may fall to a dastardly and worthless person — to be skilled in fencing. A man's estimation and value depend upon his heart and his will; that is where his true honour lies; valour is strength, not of arms and legs, but of the mind and the soul; it does not depend upon the worth of our horse or of our armour, but upon our own. He who falls persistent in his will, (*c*) *si succederit de genu pugnat.*[1] (*a*) He who abates no whit of his firmness and confidence for any danger from death not far away; he who, while yielding up his soul, still gazes at his foe with an unshrinking and disdainful eye — he is beaten, not by us, but by fortune; he is killed, not conquered.[2] (*b*) The most valiant are sometimes the most unfortunate. (*c*) So too there are defeats no less triumphant than victories. Nor did those four sister victories, the most splendid that the eyes of the sun can ever have seen, — of Salamis, Platæa, Mycale, and Sicily, — ever venture to compare all their combined glory to the glory of the defeat of King Leonidas and his men at the pass of Thermopylæ.

Who ever rushed with a more praiseworthy and more ambitious longing to the winning of a battle than did Captain Ischolas to the loss of one?[3] Who ever more skilfully and carefully assured himself of safety than he of his destruction? He was appointed to defend a certain pass in the Peloponnesus against the Arcadians; finding himself wholly unable to do this because of the nature of the place and the inequality of the forces, and making up his mind that all who should meet the enemy would by necessity remain on the field; on the other hand, deeming it unworthy, both of his own valour and nobleness of spirit and of the Lacedæmonian name, to fail in his commission, he took a middle course between those two extremes, in this way: the youngest and most active of his force he preserved for the protection and service of their country, and sent them back to

[1] If he fall, he fights kneeling. — Seneca, *De Providentia*, II. The modern text has *occiderit.*

[2] Cf. Idem, *De Constantia*, VI. Text of 1580–1588: *il est vaincu par effect, et non pas par raison; c'est son malheur qu'on peut accuser, non sa lascheté.*

[3] See Diodorus Siculus, XV, 16.

it; and with those who would be less missed, he decided to hold the pass, and by their deaths to make the enemy purchase the entrance thereto as dearly as possible. And so it fell out: for, being presently surrounded on all sides by the Arcadians, after he and his had made a great slaughter of them, they were all killed. Is there any trophy assigned to victors, which would not be more justly due to these vanquished? The real surmounting has for its part strife, not safety; [1] and the honour of courage consists in fighting, not in winning.

(*a*) To return to our narrative, these prisoners, despite all that is done to them, are so far from yielding that, on the contrary, during the two or three months that they are kept in captivity, they bear themselves cheerfully; they urge their masters to make haste to put them to that test; they defy them, insult them, upbraid them with their cowardice and with the number of battles they have lost in mutual combat. I have a ballad written by a prisoner wherein is this taunt: Let them come boldly every one, and gather together to dine upon him; for they will at the same time eat their own fathers and grandfathers, who have served as food and nourishment for his body; "these muscles," he says, "this flesh, and these veins are your own, poor fools that you are; you do not recognise that the substance of your ancestors' limbs still clings to them. Taste them carefully, and you will find in them the flavour of your own flesh"—a conceit which has no smack of barbarism. Those who depict them when dying, and who describe the act of putting them to death, depict the prisoner as spitting in the faces of those who kill him and making mouths at them. In truth, they do not, to their last gasp, cease to brave and defy them by word and look. Verily, in comparison with ourselves these men are savages indeed; for it must be that they are so, or else that we are so; there is a wonderful distance between their behaviour [2] and ours.

The men have several wives, and they have the larger number in proportion to their reputation for valour. A notably beautiful thing in their marriages is that the same

[1] *Le vray vaincre a pour son rolle l'estour, non pas le salut.*

[2] *Forme.*

eagerness that our wives have to keep us from the friendship and good-will of other women, theirs have to an equal degree to obtain this for their husbands. Being more solicitous for their husband's honour than for any other thing, they seek, and make it their care to have, as many companions as they can, forasmuch as it is a testimony to the husband's valour. (*c*) Our wives will cry out on this as a miracle: it is not so; it is a properly matrimonial virtue, but of the highest type. And in the Bible, Leah, Rachel, Sarah, and the wives of Jacob gave their beautiful maidservants to their husbands; [1] and Livia seconded the appetites of Augustus, to her own detriment; [2] and the wife of King Dejotarus, Stratonica, not only lent to her husband for his use a very beautiful young maid in her service, but carefully brought up their children and gave them a helping hand [3] toward the succession to their father's estates. (*a*) And, to the end that it may not be thought that all this is done from simple and slavish compliance with usage, and by the influence of the authority of their ancient customs, without reflection and without judgement, and because their wits are so dull that they can not take any other course, some examples of their ability should be brought forward. Besides what I have just quoted from one of their warlike songs, I have another, an amorous one, which begins in this way: "Adder, stay thee; stay thee, adder, to the end that my sister may make, after the pattern of thy markings, the fashion and workmanship of a rich girdle,[4] which I may give to my love; so shall thy beauty and thy grace be for all time more highly esteemed than all other serpents." This is the first couplet, and it is the refrain of the ballad. Now I have enough knowledge of poetry to form this judgement, that not only is there nothing barbaric in this conception, but that it is quite Anacreontic. Their language, moreover, is a soft language and has a pleasant sound, and much resembles the Greek in its terminations.

[1] See St. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, XVI, 15 and 38. Some confusion is created by the fact that Leah and Rachel were "the wives of Jacob."

[2] See Suetonius, *Augustus*, LXXI.

[3] *Leur fit espaule.* See Plutarch, *Of the virtuous deeds of women.*

[4] *Cordon.*

Three of this people — not knowing how dear the knowledge of the corruption of this country will some day cost their peace of mind and their happiness, and that from this intercourse will be born their ruin, which conjecture may be already in process of confirmation; [1] most miserable in having allowed themselves to be tricked by the desire for things unknown, and in having left the sweetness of their own skies, to come to gaze at ours — were at Rouen at the time that the late King Charles the Ninth was there.[2] The king talked with them a long while; they were shown our modes of life, our magnificence, and the outward appearance of a beautiful city. Thereafter some one [3] asked them what they thought of all this, and wished to learn from them what had seemed to them most worthy of admiration. They mentioned in reply three things, of which I have forgotten the third, and am very sorry for it; but I remember two. They said that, in the first place, they thought it very strange that so many tall, bearded men, strong and well armed, who were about the king (they probably referred to the Swiss of the Guard), should humble themselves to obey a child, and that they did not rather choose some one of themselves to command them. Secondly (they have a fashion of speech of calling men halves of one another), they had perceived that there were among us some men gorged to the full with all sorts of possessions,[4] and that their other halves were beggars at their doors, gaunt with hunger and destitution; and they thought it strange that these poverty-stricken halves could suffer such injustice, and that they did not take the others by the throat or set fire to their houses. I talked with one of them a very long while; but I had an interpreter who followed me so badly, and who was so hindered by his stupidity from grasping my ideas, that I could not have any pleasure in it. When I asked what advantage he derived from his superior position among his people (for he was a captain and our seamen called him king), he said that it was the privilege of marching at their head in war. By how

[1] *Comme je presuppose qu'elle soit desia avancée.*
[2] In 1562.
[3] Montaigne himself.
[4] The editions of 1580–1588 add: *et bien souls.*

many men he was followed. He indicated a certain extent of ground, as if to signify that it was by as many men as that space would hold — perhaps four or five thousand. Whether, when there was no war, all his authority was at an end. He said that he still retained the right, when he visited the villages that were in his dependence, to have paths made for him through the thickets of their forests, by which he could travel easily.

All this does not seem too much amiss; but then, they do not wear breeches!

CHAPTER XXXII

THAT IT IS WITH SOBRIETY THAT WE SHOULD UNDERTAKE TO JUDGE OF THE DIVINE DECREES

This short Essay, which was written in 1572, is one of the contemplations of human affairs in relation to religious theories which Montaigne fell into oftener in his earlier than in his later writings; and which he more or less summed up in the "Apologie." The chief point he makes here is that no support or authority is given to religious beliefs by any course of present events; and in proof of this he alleges the recent battles of the civil war. The arrangement of his sentences does not represent the dates of these battles quite accurately. The battle of Jarnac was fought the 13th of March, 1569, by the duc d'Anjou (afterward Henri III) on the part of the king (Charles IX) and the Catholics, against the prince de Condé and the amiral de Coligny, the Protestant chiefs. The excellent Castelnau — one of the most skilful and celebrated diplomatists of the sixteenth century, and equally distinguished for his character of wisdom and moderation — took part in the battle, and in his "Mémoires" has given an account of it. One of the first things that he says is: "The duke, seeing that this day he should be prepared to meet the enemy, having followed his good and praiseworthy habit of beginning his morning by placing himself under the protection of God, desired to receive the precious body of our Lord, as did the princes and some of the officers of our army." Equally fervent prayers we may be sure were not lacking on the Huguenot side: Montaigne was not far from believing that

> The prayers of Christian, Turk and Jew
> Have one sound up there in the blue;

certainly he did not believe that either Catholic or Protestant prayers had much influence that day at Jarnac.

The affair of La Rochelabeille came off three months later, in June, 1569; it was only a great skirmish between the troops of the amiral de Coligny and the duc d'Anjou — when the duke did not choose to risk giving battle, partly because of a heavy rain. The Protestants had no great reason to pride themselves on it; and there is something pathetic in their putting it forward, as Montaigne says they did, as a proof of divine favour.

The battle of Moncontour took place the 3d of October (1569). For a time the fortunes of the day were variable, though Coligny was fighting with only 18,000 men exhausted by long efforts, while the duc d'Anjou was strong with 25,000 fresh troops. The young Henri de Navarre (Henri IV), sixteen years old, witnessed the battle from a neighbouring height where he was placed with a body of troops, and he was restrained only by Coligny's commands from joining in the fray. Coligny's immense courage availed only to dignify the victory of the duke. Coligny was wounded and obliged to retreat.

Montaigne's conclusion, from all these events and similar ones, is that good fortune and ill fortune befall alike the saint and the sinner. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

THINGS unknown are the chief field and subject of imposture, inasmuch as, in the first place, mere unfamiliarity gains attention; and secondly, the things unknown not being within the scope of our ordinary modes of thought, we are deprived of the means of disputing the imposture.[1] (*c*) For this reason, said Plato,[2] it is much easier to give satisfaction when talking about the nature of the gods than when talking about the nature of men, because the ignorance of the hearers affords a free, wide course, and full liberty in the handling of an obscure subject. (*a*) Thence it comes to pass that nothing is so firmly believed as that which we know least, nor any people so confident as those who tell us unlikely things, such as alchemists, seers, astrologers, palmists, doctors, *et id genus omne*.[3] To whom I should like to join, if I dared, a pack of people, interpreters and registrars in ordinary of the designs of God, who make it their business to discover the causes of every happening, and to see in the mysteries of the divine will the

[1] *Et puis, n'estant point subjectes à nos discours ordinaires, elles nous ostent le moyen de les combattre.* The construction is very peculiar.

[2] In the *Critias*.

[3] And all folk of that sort.— Horace, *Satires*, I, 2.2.

incomprehensible motives of his works; and although the continual variety and discordance of events drives them from corner to corner, from east to west, foolishly to pursue what eludes them,[1] and to paint white and black with the same brush.

(*b*) In an Indian nation there is this praiseworthy custom: when they are unsuccessful in any skirmish or battle, they publicly ask forgiveness for this from the Sun (who is their god), as for a wrong[2] action, laying their good or ill fortune before the divine intelligence, and submitting to it their judgement and opinion.[3]

(*a*) For a Christian it is enough to believe that all things come from God, to receive them with recognition of his divine and inscrutable wisdom; therefore, to take them in good part under whatever aspect they be sent to him. But I think ill of what I see to be customary — the seeking to strengthen and support our religon by the prosperity of our undertakings. Our belief has enough other foundations, without giving authority to it by events; for if the people become accustomed to these arguments, which are plausible and suited to their taste, there is danger that when, in turn, adverse and disadvantageous events happen, their faith will be shaken by them. As when, in our present wars for religion, those who had the advantage in the fight at La Rochelabeille, boasting loudly of that circumstance, and making use of that good fortune as showing approval[4] of their party, when they come later to excuse their misfortunes at Moncontour and Jarnac, on the ground that these were paternal stripes and chastisements, if the people are not wholly under their control,[5] they[6] very quickly make them see that this is to take two grindings from one sack, and to blow hot and cold with the same mouth. It would be wiser to possess the people with the real bases of the truth.

[1] *De suivre leur esteuf:* "foolishly to rely on, strayne himself for, or follow after, incertainties." — Cotgrave.

[2] *Injuste.*

[3] See Gomara, *Histoire Gênérale des Indes*, III, 22.

[4] That is, divine approval.

[5] *S'ils n'ont un peuple du tout à leur mercy.*

[6] That is, those who had the advantage at La Rochelabeille, namely, the Protestants.

That was a fine naval victory [1] that was won a few months ago against the Turks, under the leadership of Don John of Austria; but it has well pleased God at other times to let us see other such victories at our expense. In fine, it is not easy to weigh divine things in our scales without their suffering diminution. And he who should desire to account for Arius and Leo his pope,[2] the chief heads of that [Arian] heresy, dying at different times in ways so alike and unusual — for each of them having withdrawn, because of a stomach-ache, from a debate to the closet, they there suddenly rendered up their souls; and who should exaggerate this divine vengeance by the accident of place, might well add the death of Heliogabalus, who also was killed in a privy.[3] But consider! Irenæus was involved in the same fortune.

(*c*) God, desiring to teach us that the good have something else to hope for and the wicked something else to fear than the good fortunes or ill fortunes of this world, manages and allots these according to his occult will, and takes from us the means of unwisely counting on them.[4] And they who seek to prevail over them by human reasoning deceive themselves; they never give them one hit that they do not receive from them two. St. Augustine shows this clearly in his adversaries.[5] It is a contest that is decided by the weapons of memory rather than by those of reason. (*a*) We must be content with the light that it may please the sun to shed upon us by his beams; [6] and he who shall raise his eyes to bring a brighter beam into his very body, let him not think it strange if, for the punishment of his audacity, he thus lose his sight. (*c*) *Quis hominum potest scire consilium dei? aut quis poterit cogitare quid velit dominus?* [7]

[1] At Lepanto (1571). [2] See Jean Bouchet, *Annales d'Aquitaine*.

[3] See Lampridius, *Heliogabalus*, XVII. But, says M. Villey, Montaigne probably took this and the following (Irenæus) from the compilation of Ravisius Textor.

[4] *D'en faire sottement nostre profit.*

[5] The meaning here is not at all clear. The text is: *une belle preuve sur ses adverseres;* a variant reading of the *Édition Municipale* has *à ses adverseres*. See *De Civ. Dei*, I, 8.

[6] See Plutarch, *Of Curiosity*.

[7] For who among men is he that can know the counsel of God? or who can think what the will of God is? — *Book of Wisdom*, IX, 13.

CHAPTER XXXIII

OF AVOIDING PLEASURES AT THE COST OF LIFE

This title does not mean that Montaigne thought it well to do so, but that he was considering the opinions of the ancients. He had always known that they thought it was time to die when there was more pain than pleasure in living; but he had only lately learned that Seneca and Epicurus also counselled their friends to die rather than live a worthless life. And Montaigne then remarks that the same feeling may be found among *nos gents* (that is, among moderns with religious beliefs), save that, with "Christian moderation," they do not seek death at their own hands, but by the act of God, moving him thereto by their prayers.

I HAD clearly seen that the greater number of ancient doctrines agree in this: that it is time to die when there is more ill than good in life; and that to preserve our lives to our pain and discomfort is to interfere with the very laws of Nature, as these old precepts say: —

> Ἢ ζῆν ἀλύπως, ἢ θανεῖν εὐδαιμόνως.
> Καλὸν τὸ θνήσκειν οἷς ὕβριν τὸ ζῆν φέρει.
> Κρεῖσσον τὸ μη ζῆν ἐστὶν ἢ ζῆν ἀθλίως.[1]

But as for carrying contempt of death to such a degree as to make use of it to sever oneself from the honours, wealth, dignities, and other favours and possessions which we call good fortune, — as if reason had not difficulty enough to persuade us to abandon them, without the addition of this greater demand, — I had never seen it enjoined or practised until that passage of Seneca fell into my hands in which he advises Lucilius, a personage in power, and of great authority with those about the Emperor, to lay aside his life of pleasure and pomp, and to withdraw from worldly ambition to a solitary, tranquil, and philosophical mode of life; whereupon, Lucilius having put forward some difficulties, he said: "It is my opinion that you should either

[1] Either a tranquil life, or a fortunate death. It is well to die when life is a disgrace. It is better not to live than to live in wretchedness. — Taken by Montaigne from a collection of Greek sentences published by Jean Crispin in 1569.

depart from this sort of life, or from life altogether; and I advise you to follow the easier path, and to untie rather than break that which you have unwisely knotted; provided that, if it can not be untied otherwise, you break it. There is no man so cowardly that he does not like better to fall once for all than to remain forever tottering." [1]

I should have thought this advice befitting the Stoic austerity; but it is the stranger because it is borrowed from Epicurus, who writes to Idomeneus on this subject with similar expressions.[2] And I think that I have observed a like feeling in men of the present day, but held with Christian moderation. St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, that famous opponent of the Arian heresy, being in Syria, was informed that Abra, his only daughter, whom he had left behind with her mother, was sought in marriage by the most prominent nobles of the region, as a well-brought-up, beautiful, and wealthy maiden, in the bloom of youth. He wrote to her (as we see) that she should withdraw her inclination from all the pleasures and advantages offered her; that he had found in his journeying a much greater and worthier match for her, in a husband of far different power and magnificence, who would bestow upon her robes and jewels of inestimable value. His purpose was to cause her to lose the taste and habit of worldly pleasures, that she might be united wholly to God; but the shortest and surest means to that end seeming to him to be his daughter's death, he did not cease to implore God, by vows and prayers and supplications, to take her from this world and call her to Himself; as it came to pass; for very soon after his return she departed from him; [3] whereat he manifested a surpassing [4] joy. This seems to go further than the other examples, in that he resorts to this method at the outset, which they adopt only secondarily; and then, too, it concerned his only daughter. But let me not omit the end of this story, though it does not bear upon my subject. The wife of St. Hilary, having learned from him that their daughter's death had come about through his design and wish, and how much more fortunate it was for

[1] See Seneca, *Epistle* 22.3.
[2] See Idem, *Epistle* 23.5.
[3] *Elle luy mourut.*
[4] *Singulière.* See Jean Bouchet, *Annales d'Aquitaine.*

her to be removed from this world than to be in it, conceived so vividly the eternal and heavenly blessedness, that she besought her husband with extreme urgency to do as much for her. And God, at their united prayers, soon after taking her to himself, her death was welcomed by both with peculiar pleasure.[1]

CHAPTER XXXIV

THAT FORTUNE IS OFTEN MET WITH IN THE TRAIN OF REASON

This Essay is only a collection of historic stories, and of more or less authentic and more or less incredible facts; and its inherent dullness is only occasionally relieved by a jest from Montaigne, as when he quotes: "Fortune is better advised than we"; which were the last words of the Essay in 1580. M. Villey remarks: "These anecdotes and others of the same kind are multiplied in such compilations as those of Messie and Bouoystuau. Montaigne was slow to loose himself from their habits. However, his Essays of this kind are few in number."

FROM the inconstancy of the varying dance of fortune, she shows us every kind of aspect. Was there ever an action of justice more full of purpose than this? The Duke of Valentinois,[2] having determined to poison Adrian, Cardinal of Corneto, with whom his father, Pope Alexander VI, and himself were to sup at the Vatican, sent on beforehand a bottle of poisoned wine, and bade the butler keep it very carefully. The Pope arriving before his son and asking for something to drink, the butler, who thought that this wine had been specially committed to his care only because of its excellence, served it to the Pope; and the duke himself, arriving at the moment of the collation, and believing that his bottle had not been touched, in his turn drank from it; so it befell that the father instantly died, and the son, after having for a long time suffered greatly from illness, was preserved for another worse fate.[3]

[1] *Ce fut une mort embrassée avec singulier contentement commun.*
[2] Cæsar Borgia.
[3] See Guicciardini, VI.

Sometimes it seems that she of set purpose makes sport of us. The Seigneur d'Estrée, then ensign to Monsieur de Vendome, and the Seigneur de Liques, lieutenant in the company of the Duc d'Ascot, both being suitors to the sister of the Sieur de Fougueselles, although they were of different parties, — as often happens between neighbours on the frontier, — the Sieur de Liques was the winner; but, on the very day of the wedding, and, what is worse, before they were bedded, the husband, wishing to break a lance in honour of his new spouse, took part in the skirmish near Saint Omer, where the Sieur d'Estrée, being the stronger, made him his prisoner; and, to give value to his success, the maiden, —

> Conjugis ante coacta novi dimittere collum,
> Quam veniens una atque altera rursus hyems
> Noctibus in longis avidum saturasset amorem,[1] —

must needs sue to him to render up to her, by way of courtesy, his prisoner; which thing he did, for the gentlemen of France never deny any thing to ladies.[2]

(*c*) Does not this seem a purposed fate?[3] Constantine, son of Helen, was the first ruler of the empire of Constantinople; and, several centuries later, Constantine, son of Helen, was the last.[4]

(*a*) Sometimes she[5] is pleased to vie with our miracles. It is believed that, when King Clovis was besieging Angoulême, the walls fell of themselves, by divine favour;[6] and Bouchet cites from some author that, when King Robert[7] was besieging a city, and had secretly left the siege to go to

[1] Compelled to release from her embrace her new spouse before two winters in succession, with their long nights, had sated her eager love. — Catullus, LXVIII, 81.

[2] See the *Mémoires* of Martin du Bellay, II.

[3] *Semble il pas que ce soit un sort artiste?* — "On peut remarquer que Montaigne n'emploie pas ce mot [*artiste*] adjectivement avant son voyage en Italie, et c'est lui seulement qui l'emploie dans ce sens: qui montre de l'art, de l'intention, selon les regles de l'école et de l'art."

[4] See Jacques de Lavardin, *Histoire de G. Castriot* (Scanderbeg).

[5] Fortune.

[6] See Bouchet, *Annales d'Aquitaine.*

[7] Son of Hugh Capet.

Orléans to celebrate the feast of Saint-Aignan, while he was at his devotions, at a certain point in the mass, the walls of the besieged city fell in ruins without any assault. She laid just the opposite in our Milanese wars; for when Captain Rense was besieging for us the city of Eronne, and had laid a mine under a great section of the wall, the wall, being suddenly lifted up from the ground, fell back nevertheless quite whole,[1] and so exactly upon its foundations that the besieged were none the worse off.[2]

Sometimes she plays the physician. Jason Phereus, being given up by the doctors because of an impostume in his breast, and wishing to rid himself of it though it were by death, rushed madly, in a battle, into the thick of the enemy, where he was so fortunately wounded in the body that his impostume broke, and he was cured.[3] Did she not excel the painter Protogenes in the knowledge of his art? He, having finished the picture of a tired and panting dog, to his satisfaction in all other respects save this, that he was unable to represent as he desired the froth and slaver, greatly vexed with his work, took his sponge, soaked as it was with divers colours, and threw it at the painting, to efface it all; but fortune opportunely guided the sponge to the place of the dog's mouth, and there accomplished what art had been unable to attain.[4]

Does she not sometimes show the best way to our decisions, and correct them? Isabel, Queen of England,[5] having to return from Zealand to her kingdom, with an army, in support of her son against her husband, would have been lost if she had arrived at the port she had selected, being awaited there by her enemies; but Fortune drove her, against her will, to another place, where she landed in perfect safety. And that ancient who, throwing a stone at a dog, struck and killed his step-mother — was not he justified in uttering this line: —

[1] *Recheut toutes-fois tout empanné.*

[2] See *Mémoires* du Bellay, II.

[3] See Pliny, *Natural History*, VII, 51 (50). Valerius Maximus (I, 8, *ext.* 6) and Seneca (*De Beneficiis*, II, 19) give a slightly different version.

[4] See Pliny, *Natural History*, XXXV, 10.

[5] Wife of Edward II. See Froissart, I, 10.

Ταυτόματον ἡμῶν καλλίω βουλεύεται.[1]

Fortune is better advised than we.

(*c*) Icetes had suborned two soldiers to kill Timoleon, then tarrying at Adrana in Sicily. They chose the time when he was offering a sacrifice, and mixed with the multitude. As they were signalling to each other [2] that the moment was opportune for their business, lo, a third man who, with a great sword-cut, strikes one of them over the head and casts him dead to the ground, and then flees. The confederate, believing himself to be discovered and lost, ran to the altar and demanded sanctuary, promising to tell the whole truth. While he is giving account of the conspiracy, lo, the third man, who has been caught, and whom, as an assassin, the populace push and tug through the press, toward Timoleon and the eminent men of the assemblage. From them he cries for pardon, and declares that he had rightly killed the murderer of his father, proving on the spot, by witnesses whom his good luck opportunely supplied, that his father had in truth been killed, in the city of the Leontines, by him upon whom he had revenged himself. Ten Attic minæ were ordered to be given him for having had the hap, while taking satisfaction for his own father's death, to have saved from death the common father of the Sicilians.[3] This piece of fortune surpasses in guidance all the guidance of human prudence.[4]

(*b*) To conclude: in the following fact is there not disclosed a very manifest expression of her favour, her kindness, and her singular compassion? The two Ignatii,—father and son,—proscribed by the triumvirs of Rome, resolved together on the virtuous action of giving their lives each to the other, and thus frustrating the cruelty of the tyrants. They rushed upon each other, sword in hand; she [5] guided the points and made the two thrusts alike mortal,

[1] Fortune's plan is better than ours. — Menander. Montaigne found this in the collection published in 1569 by Jean Crispin. He translates the line after quoting it.

[2] *Comme ils se guignoient l'un l'autre.*

[3] See Plutarch, *Life of Timoleon.*

[4] *Cette fortune surpasse en reglement les regles de l'humaine prudence.*

[5] Fortune.

and vouchsafed to them, in honour of so noble a friendship, that they should have just enough strength to withdraw their bloody weapons from the wounds,[1] in order to embrace each other, in that state, with so strong a clasp that the executioners cut off their two heads at the same time, leaving the bodies still clasped in that noble bond,[2] and the wounds, closely touching, sucking up the blood and what was left of life, one from the other.[3]

CHAPTER XXXV

OF A DEFECT IN OUR ADMINISTRATION OF CITIES

Each of the three paragraphs of this little Essay has its separate interest: the first because of the reference to Montaigne's father (whom he always speaks of with the highest and warmest regard), and because of the impression it gives of one of the differences between Montaigne's age and ours — the difference of the age before newspapers, and after. (Guillaume Guizot says that the suggestion of Montaigne père was put in execution in Paris by Theophraste Renaudet in 1615.)

The interest of the next paragraph lies in the character and position of the two men to whom it refers; and in Montaigne's expressions concerning them, his wish to be of material service to their like has a characteristic simplicity and sincerity and earnestness of delightful quality.

The third and last paragraph has little to do with what precedes, but connects itself with Montaigne's thought of his father. The Essay closes with a vigorous avowal of Montaigne's belief in the advantages of keeping a diary.

MY late father, a man of very sound judgement for one who had no other help than experience and his natural parts, told me in former days that[4] he had desired to arrange that there should be in cities a certain specified place to which those might go who had need of any thing, and have their business noted down by an official appointed for that purpose. (*c*) As, for instance, I am trying to sell some pearls; I am looking for pearls for sale; (*a*) So-and-so desires company in going to

[1] *De retirer encore des playes leurs bras sanglants et armês.*

[2] *Nœud.*

[3] See Appian, IV, 21.

[4] In 1580–1588 occurs this phrase: *Es commandemens qui luy estoyent tombez en main.*

Paris; So-and-so is enquiring for a servant of such-and-such a sort, So-and-so for a master; So-and-so wants a workman; one this thing, and another that, each according to his needs. And it seems as if this method of mutual information would bring no slight convenience into public commerce; for at all times there are conditions which seek one another, and from not being able to come to an understanding, leave men in dire need. I learn, with great shame for our age, that before our eyes two men most eminent in learning have died in the condition of not having a sufficiency of food: Lilius Gregorius Geraldus [1] in Italy, and Sebastianus Castalio [2] in Germany; and I think that there are a thousand men who would have sent for them on most advantageous terms, (*c*) or would have assisted them where they were, (*a*) had they known the facts. The world is not so universally corrupted that I do not know a certain man who wishes with all his heart that the means which his forbears have put in his hands could be employed, so long as it pleases Fortune that he shall enjoy them, in placing beyond the reach of want those persons of rare and noteworthy merit of any sort whom ill-fortune sometimes forces to the wall — a man who would put them at least in such a condition that it would be unreasonable if they were not content.

(*c*) In his household administration my father had a fashion which I can praise, but not at all follow. It was this: in addition to the register of the business transactions of the household, wherein are set down the small accounts, payments, bargains which do not require the hand of a notary, — which register a steward has in charge, — he ordered that one of his people who acted as his secretary to keep a daily record, and to set down in it, day after day, all the occurrences of any importance, and the chronicles of the life of his house: very pleasant to look over when time begins to efface the remembrance of these things, and often very convenient to save us trouble: when such a work was entered upon; when finished; what great personages came to us; how long they remained; [3] our journeys; our absences; marriages;

[1] An Italian archæologist and poet, 1479–1552.

[2] 1515–1563.

[3] *Quels trains y ont passe; combien* [*de temps?*] *arreste.*

deaths; the receipt of good or bad news; changings of the principal servants — such matters. An old custom which I think it a good plan to revive, each in his own house. And I think I am a fool for having failed to do so.

CHAPTER XXXVI

OF THE CUSTOM OF WEARING CLOTHES

MONTAIGNE thinks that, as all other beings are perfectly furnished with what is needful for the maintenance of their existence, it is not to be believed that man alone is created in an "indigent" condition; and therefore we had (perhaps) better go naked and see what comes of it; or, at least, this might be well if custom had not made impossible what is not so by nature. He tells a story of a question asked of "one of our beggars" which Locke ("Of Education," § 5) puts into the mouth of an Athenian who addressed it to a Scythian philosopher. The story may be told as often as you please without inducing us to go *en chemise* today.

Montaigne passes on, as he says, "d'une autre piece," to the consideration of the material effects of cold, and to the difficulties and calamities caused by it in warfare; and then twists back again, oddly enough, to the clothes and the utensils of the King of Mexico, which last paragraph was added in 1588.

WHATEVER road I choose, I must needs break down some barrier set up by custom, so carefully has she blocked all our paths. I was questioning, in this chilly season, whether the fashion in these lately discovered nations of going entirely naked is a fashion compelled by the high temperature of the atmosphere, as we narrate of the Indians and Moors, or whether it is the original practice of mankind. Inasmuch as every thing under the heavens, as says Holy Writ,[1] is subject to the same laws, men of intelligence are accustomed, in matters like these, where the natural laws must be distinguished from those devised by man, to have recourse to the general administration of the world, in which there can be nothing irregular. Now, since all other creatures are perfectly supplied with what is needful to keep themselves alive,[2] it is

[1] *Ecclesiastes*, IX, 3. *Omnium quæ sub sole sunt fortuna et lex par est.* This sentence was inscribed on the beams of Montaigne's library.

[2] *Exactement fourny ailleurs de filet et éguille pour maintenir son estre.*

truly incredible that we alone should be brought into the world in a defective and necessitous state, and in a state which can not be maintained without outside assistance. So I hold that, as plants, trees, animals, all living things, are furnished by nature with sufficient covering to protect themselves from the assaults of the weather, —

Proptereaque fere res omnes aut corio sunt,
Aut seta, aut conchis, aut callo, aut cortice tectæ,[1] —

so too were we; but, like those who quench by artificial light the light of day, we have quenched our own means by borrowed means. And it is easy to see that it is custom which makes, for us, impossible that which is not so in itself; for of those nations which have no knowledge of clothing, some there are, seated in much the same climate as ours; [2] and besides, our most tender parts are those which are always uncovered: (*c*) the eyes, the mouth, the nose, the ears; and with our peasants, as with our forefathers, the breast and the belly. (*a*) If we were born with the need of petticoats and breeches, it is not to be doubted that nature would have protected with a thicker skin the whole body exposed to the battery of the seasons, as she has done the ends of the fingers and the soles of the feet. (*c*) Why does it seem difficult to believe? Between the way I am clothed and that of the peasant of my province I find far more difference than there is between his way and that of a man who is clad only in his skin. How many, especially in Turkey, go naked from piety! [3]

(*a*) I know not who it was who asked one of our beggars, whom he saw in his shirt in mid-winter as lusty as he who goes muffled up to his ears in furs, how he could have such endurance. "But you, sir," he replied, "have your face uncovered; now, as for me, I am all face." The Italians tell of the fool of the Duke of Florence, I think, that, on

[1] And for this reason almost all things are covered with hide, or bristles, or shell, or hard skin, or bark. — Lucretius, IV, 935.

[2] The following clause, found in 1580, but not in 1588 or in the *Édition Municipale*, was restored in 1595: *et sous bien plus rude ciel que le nostre.*

[3] See Guillaume Postel, *Histoire des Turcs* (1560 and 1575).

his master's making enquiry how, so ill clad, he could bear the cold wind by which he was himself much discomforted, "Follow my rule," he replied, "and pile on all your garments, as I do mine; then you will suffer from the cold no more than I do." King Massinissa, even to extreme old age, could not be induced to cover his head, however cold or stormy or rainy it might be;[1] (*c*) which is told also of the Emperor Severus. In the battles fought between the Egyptians and the Persians, Herodotus says that it was observed, both by others and by himself, that of those who fell, the skull of the Egyptians was incomparably harder than that of the Persians, by reason that the latter always covered their heads with biggins and afterwards with turbans, while the former were shaved close from childhood and went bareheaded.[2] (*a*) And King Agesilaus, up to his days of decrepitude, continued to wear the same vesture in winter as in summer.[3] Cæsar, Suetonius says, always marched at the head of his forces, and oftenest on foot, with his head uncovered, rain or shine;[4] and the same is told of Hannibal: —

> tum vertice nudo
> Excipere insanos imbres, cœlique ruinam.[5]

(*c*) A Venetian who has lived in the kingdom of Pegu a long while, and who has just come thence, writes that there both men and women, the other parts of their bodies being clothed, go always barefoot, even on horseback.[6] And Plato earnestly[7] advises, for the health of the whole body, that we give the feet and the head no other covering than that which nature has provided. (*a*) He whom the Poles chose

[1] See Cicero, *De Senectute*, X. Probably taken by Montaigne from Beroaldus's *Commentary on Suetonius*.

[2] See Herodotus, III, 12.

[3] See Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians*.

[4] See Suetonius, *Life of Cæsar*.

[5] With bare head he received the furious rain, and the torrents falling from heaven. — Silius Italicus, I, 250. Montaigne took this also from Beroaldus, *ubi supra*.

[6] See Gasparo Balbi, *Travels in the East Indies* (1590).

[7] *Merveilleusement*. See Plato, *Laws*, book XII.

for their king[1] after the one of our nation,[2] and who is, in truth, one of the greatest princes of our time, never wears gloves, and does not change, in winter and whatever the weather [when he goes out of doors], the cap that he wears indoors.

(*b*) While I can not bear to be unbuttoned and untied, the labouring men of my neighbourhood would feel as if in shackles were they otherwise. Varro holds that, when it was decreed that we should keep our heads uncovered in the presence of the gods or of a man high in authority, it was so decreed more for our health, and to strengthen us against the assaults of the weather, than as a token of respect.[3] (*a*) And since we are on the subject of cold weather, and, being Frenchmen, are accustomed to array ourselves in many colours (*b*) (not I, for I seldom wear other than black or white, following my father's fashion), (*a*) let us add, on another subject,[4] what Captain Martin du Bellay narrates, that, in marching through Luxembourg, he knew frosts so severe that the wine provided for the army was broken with axe and hatchet, and distributed to the troops by weight, and that they carried it away in baskets.[5] And Ovid, to much the same effect,—

> Nudaque consistunt formam servantia testæ
> Vina, nec hausta meri, sed data frusta bibunt.[6]

(*b*) The frosts are so hard at the mouth of the Palus Mœotides, that on the same ground where the lieutenant of Mithridates had given battle to the enemy on dry land, and had there defeated them, when summer had come, he won a

[1] Stephen Bathori.

[2] *Apres le nostre.* Henri de Valois, duc d'Anjou, King of Poland, 1573–1574; afterwards Henri III of France. This passage was added in 1582.

[3] See Pliny, *Natural History*, XXVIII, 6.

[4] *D'une autre piece.*

[5] See *Mémoires* of du Bellay, X.

[6] The wine, frozen solid, keeps the form of the jar from which it has been removed; they do not drink it liquid, but doled out in lumps. — Ovid, *Tristia*, III, 10.23. In the first edition the Essay ended here.

battle at sea against them.[1] (*c*) The Romans suffered great disadvantage in the engagement they had with the Carthaginians near Placentia, because they went into the fight with their blood congealed and their limbs stiffened by the cold; while Hannibal had had fires built everywhere in his army, to warm his soldiers, and oil distributed to the troops, in order that, anointing themselves, they might make their muscles more limber and supple, and protect the pores against the blasts of the freezing wind that was blowing.[2] The retreat of the Greeks, from Babylon to their own country, is famous for the difficulties and discomforts that they had to overcome. One of them was this: that, being overtaken in the mountains of Armenia by a terrible snowstorm, they, in consequence, lost all knowledge of the country and the roads; and being suddenly beleaguered by it, they were a day and night without drinking or eating, the greater part of their animals and many of themselves dead, many blinded by the sleet and the glare of the snow, many maimed in their hands and feet, many stiff and benumbed and paralysed with the cold,[3] still in full possession of their senses. Alexander saw a nation among whom the fruit trees are buried in winter to protect them from the frost.[4]

(*b*) On the subject of clothes, the king of Mexico changed his apparel four times a day, never wore any thing a second time, making use of his discarded garments in his constant liberalities and rewards; in like manner, no vessel, or dish, or kitchen or table utensil was put before him twice.[5]

[1] See Strabo, VII. In M. Villey's opinion, this source is very uncertain, and the passage does not indicate that Montaigne had read Strabo's geography.

[2] See Livy, XXI, 54.

[3] See Xenophon, *Anabasis*, IV, 4.5.

[4] See Diodorus Siculus, XVII, 18. The edition of 1595 adds: *et nous en pouvons aussi voir.*

[5] See Lopez de Gomara, *Histoire Générale des Indes.*

CHAPTER XXXVII

OF THE YOUNGER CATO

What Montaigne says of himself and what he says of the men of his time in the first two pages of this Essay give one a very strong impression both of the moral isolation in which he felt himself to be living, and of the sincerity with which he disclaimed for himself any great moral elevation. But no man could have a warmer appreciation of the heights of virtue than Montaigne, and he only does himself justice in declaring that, so great is his delight in noble and generous actions, with "great names" he would gladly boost them to raise them higher — "*je la prendrois volontiers à leur prester quelque tour d'espaules pour les haulser.*"

This Essay is nominally about Cato the Younger, Cato "junior." He was "the junior" of his great-grandfather Cato the Censor; and he is known as Cato of Utica, merely because Utica was the scene of his death.

He was only forty-nine when he died — when he killed himself in despair at the triumphant successes of Cæsar. All his life he was the enemy — the immitigable enemy, the vigorous opponent — of tyranny; justice, rigid justice, unmoved by favour, untouched by compassion, was the object of his devotion. This stern severity of character was accepted as high virtue, and excited extraordinary reverence. His firmness of purpose could not be weakened by flattery or daunted by violence, and his disinterestedness was unquestioned. He was a great public servant and kept untiring watch and ward over public affairs. But he lacked the practical ability, the sound judgement, the large views that would have been needed to be a wise leader in those tumultuous days; and he vainly strove to form, between the party of Cæsar and the party of Pompey, a party of the Commonwealth. And when the civil war broke out, the most important part he played was that of a patriotic philanthropist. A year or two later, he was entrusted by the Senate with troops, whom he managed not very competently, and carried to Africa, where he formed a junction with other Roman generals and became second in command. The whole army was the next year utterly routed by Cæsar; and Cato immediately sought refuge in death from the despotism he abhorred.

From that moment he has been the object of interminable panegyric. Cicero magnificently leads the endless procession of his praisers with a separate eulogy that has been lost, and with beautiful expressions in his "De Officiis"; and following Cicero, come the great historians, Plutarch and Tacitus and Sallust, and then the poet Juvenal and the philosopher Seneca, and among these great men the five poets whom it is the purpose of the Essay to bring together for comparison and criticism: Martial, Manilius, Lucan, Horace, and Virgil. In this connection we have one of Montaigne's admirable sayings about poetry, which is cap-

able of being generalised to relate to all Art: "To a certain slight extent it can be judged of by maxims and by skill, but the excellent, the ineffable, the divine, is above rules and the power of judgement."

He says of himself: "From my earliest childhood, poetry has had the power to pierce and transport me"; and he tells us how he liked first Ovid and then Lucan and now Virgil: as a man might say in these days, that as a boy he admired Moore, and then Byron, and at last Milton.

As we read these pages, it is interesting to remember that Dante makes Cato the warden of Purgatory. The thought was perhaps suggested to him by the very line of Virgil that Montaigne quotes. As Cato stands on the shores of Purgatory, his countenance is illumined with the light of the four stars which are the four Virtues — Justice, Prudence, Fortitude, and Temperance; and it is foretold of him that he will be clothed in glory at the last day. Dante takes him as the symbol of Liberty, for, as Virgil says to him: "non ti fu per lei amara in Utica la morte" (for the sake of Liberty not bitter to thee was death in Utica). The purpose of Purgatory is the gaining of freedom from sin through purification, the winning of spiritual Liberty; and, therefore, the great lover of Liberty is a fit guardian of the realm.

Erasmus thought that Cicero could hardly be denied admittance to Heaven. Dante places Cato on the way to it, far removed from the Limbo of the heathen and the dreadful wood of the suicides. He writes of him in the "Convito" with the greatest reverence. The passage ends thus: "With his name it is fitting to close that which was to be said here of the signs of nobleness, because this nobleness displays all these signs in him at all times of his life."

Montaigne's words seem almost a modern echo of the same thought when he says that Cato "was truly a pattern that Nature chose, to show to how great a height human virtue and steadfastness could attain."

I DO not make that common mistake of judging another according to what I myself am. I readily believe that in others are things different from those that are in me.[1] (*c*) While I feel that I am pledged to a certain manner of existence, I do not oblige every one to adopt it, as some men do; and I know and conceive a thousand contrary ways of life, and, unlike people in general, I perceive more easily the difference than the resemblance between us. I exempt another as much as you please from being of my conditions and principles, and consider him simply in himself, without connection, measuring him by his own model. While I am not continent, I do not fail fully to acknowledge the continence of the Feuillants and

[1] In 1580–1588: *Je croy aysement d'autruy beaucoup de choses, où mes forces ne peuvent attaindre.*

Capuchins, and to perceive clearly the character of their conduct. In imagination I enter very completely into their skin;[1] and I like and honour them all the more because they are different from me. I especially desire that we be judged each by himself, and that I be not depicted from common models.

(*a*) My weakness in no wise changes the esteem that I ought to have of the strength and vigour of those who deserve it. (*c*) *Sunt qui nihil laudent, nisi quod se imitari posse confidunt.*[2] (*a*) Crawling on the muddy earth, I do not fail to observe the unattainable height, among the clouds, of some heroic souls. It is much for me to have my judgement well ordered, if my acts can not be, and to keep at least that sovereign part free from corruption; it is something to have my will right when my legs fail me. This age in which we live, at least so far as our region is concerned, is so leaden that (*c*) I do not say the performance, but the very conception of (*a*) virtue is lacking to it, and seems to be naught else than the chatter of school-boys: —

> (*c*) virtutem verba putant, ut
> Lucum ligna.[3]

Quam vereri deberent, etiamsi percipere non possent.[4] It is a bauble to hang in a study, or on the tip of the tongue, like an ear-ring on the ear, for ornament.

(*a*) There is no longer any recognition of virtuous[5] actions; those which bear that aspect have none the less not the essence of virtue; for gain, glory, fear, habit, and other such alien causes lead us to perform them. The justice, the valour, the kindliness which we then practise may be so styled from another's observation and from the aspect they

[1] *Je m'insinue fort bien en leur place.*

[2] There are those who praise nothing save what they are confident they can themselves imitate. — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, II, 1.

[3] They think virtue is but a word, and the sacred grove a mere wood. — Horace, *Epistles*, I, 6.31. In the original text this is a question — "putes?" The quotation was added in 1582.

[4] Which they should revere even if they could not comprehend it. — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, V, 2. The text is changed slightly; Cicero is speaking of philosophy, Montaigne of virtue.

[5] *Purement vertueuse* in 1580–1588.

wear to the public eye; but for the man himself[1] they are not virtues at all; he has had another end in view, (*c*) there has been another moving cause. (*a*) Now virtue accepts as her own nothing save what is done by her and for her alone.

(*c*) In that great battle at Potidæa, which the Greeks under Pausanias won against Mardonius and the Persians, the victors, according to their custom, coming to apportion among themselves the glory of the exploit, attributed to the Spartan nation the preëminence for valour in the conflict. The Spartans, — excellent judges of bravery, — when they came to decide to which individual the honour belonged of having done the best in this battle, found that Aristodemus had risked his life most fearlessly; but none the less they did not for this give him the prize, because his courage had been incited by the desire to clear himself from the blame he had incurred in the action at Thermopylæ, and by a longing to die courageously so that his past disgrace might be wiped out.[2]

(*a*) Our judgements are now unsound, and follow the depravity of our morals. I see the greater number of the intelligent men of my time use their sharp-wittedness to dim the glory of the noble and generous acts of ancient times, giving them some base interpretation, and devising for them idle causes and occasions. (*b*) Wonderful subtlety! Show me the most excellent act, of purest quality, and I will bring forward plausibly fifty vicious motives for it. God knows what a diversity of representations our secret will admits of, for him who is pleased to spread them out![3] (*c*) They do not use their sharp-wittedness so craftily as clumsily and coarsely, in their detraction. The same trouble they take to belittle those great names, and the same license, I would gladly take to lend them a hand to boost them.[4] Those rare personages, culled out as examples to the world by the

[1] *Chez l'ouvrier.*

[2] See Herodotus, IX, 70. This is said to have occurred at the battle of Platæa, not Potidæa.

[3] *A qui les veut estendre, quelle diversité d'images ne souffre nostre interne volonté.*

[4] *Leur prester quelque tour d'espaule à les hausser.* See Book II, chap. 17: *Je tesmoigne volontiers de mes amis par ce que j'y trouve de louable, et d'un pied de valeur j'en fais volontiers un pied et demy.*

agreement of wise men — I should not hesitate to redouble their honour, so far as my imagination was capable, by interpretation and by favourable environment. But we must believe that the efforts of our imagination fall far short of their desert. It is the duty of men of worth to depict virtue with the utmost beauty; and it would not misbecome us if emotion should carry us out of ourselves with regard to such sacred figures. What they[1] do, on the contrary, (*a*) they do, either from dissatisfaction, or from that fault of which I have just spoken, of adjusting their belief to their capacity, or, as I am more inclined to think, from their sight not being strong enough and clear enough, or trained to imagine and conceive the splendour of virtue in its native purity; as Plutarch says, that in his time some people attributed the cause of the death of the younger Cato to the fear he had had of Cæsar; whereat he[2] is justly offended; and we can judge from that how much more indignant he would have been with those who attributed it to ambition.[3] (*c*) Fools! he would have done finely a fine thing, noble and rightful, with obloquy rather than for fame. (*a*) This great man was in very truth a pattern that Nature chose, to show to how great a height human virtue and steadfastness could attain.

But this is not the place for me to treat this rich subject; I desire only to bring together in contention the expressions of five Latin poets in praise of Cato, (*c*) both for Cato's sake, and, incidentally, for their own also. Now, the well-educated youth should find the first two, in comparison with the others, languid; the third more vigorous, but injured by the extravagance of his vehemence. He should perceive that there is room for one or two degrees of imagination before reaching the fourth, where he will clasp his hands in admiration. At the last, first by an interval, — but an interval which he will swear could not be filled by any human mind, — he will be amazed, he will be struck dumb. This is a marvel: we have many more poets than judges and inter-

[1] Referring to "the greater number of the intelligent men of my time," at the beginning of the paragraph.

[2] That is, Plutarch. See *Of the malignity of Herodotus*.

[3] The edition of 1580 adds: *et de ceux qui font l'honneur la fin de toutes actions vertueuses*.

preters of poetry; it is easier to create it than to know what it is. To a certain slight extent it can be judged of by maxims and by skill; but the excellent, the ineffable, the divine, is above rules and the power of judgement. Whoever discerns its beauty with a firm and steady vision, he does not see it any more than the splendour of a lightning-flash; it does not employ our judgement; it seizes it and sweeps it away. The frenzy that possesses him who is able to understand it, is communicated to another from hearing him talk of it and recite it; as the magnet not only attracts a needle, but imparts to it its power to attract others. And it is seen more clearly at the theatre, how the sacred inspiration of the Muses — having first agitated the poet with anger, grief, hate, and carried him where they will, out of himself — enters, through the poet, into the actor, and consecutively, through the actor, into the whole audience: it is the chain of our needles, hanging one from another.[1] From my earliest childhood, poetry has had the power to pierce and transport me;[2] but that very keen emotion which is natural to me has been diversely touched by diversity of forms — not so much higher and lower forms, for they were always the highest of each kind, as difference in quality: first, a lively and fanciful fluidity; then, a keen and enhanced subtlety; lastly, a perfected and sure strength. Examples will express this better: Ovid, Lucan, Virgil. But behold our group on the race-track!

(*a*) Sit Cato, dum vivit, sane vel Cæsare major,[3]

says one.

Et invictum, devicta morte, Catonem,[4]

says another. And another, speaking of the civil wars between Cæsar and Pompey, —

[1] See Plato, *Io*.

[2] See Book I, chap. 26 ("Of the Education of Children"), near the beginning, for another reference by Montaigne to his passion for poetry.

[3] Grant that Cato, in his lifetime, was greater than Cæsar. — Martial, *Epigrams*, VI, 32. Montaigne gives his own significance to this line, which in the original is not of a wholly flattering character.

[4] And Cato, unconquerable, conquered death. — Manilius, *Astronomica*, IV, 87.

Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.[1]

And the fourth, while praising Cæsar, —

Et cuncta terrarum subacta,
Præter atrocem animum Catonis.[2]

And the leader of the choir, after having set forth in his verse the fames [3] of the greatest Romans, concludes thus: —

His dantem jura Catonem.[4]

CHAPTER XXXVIII

HOW WE WEEP AND LAUGH AT ONE AND THE SAME THING

Montaigne here touches, not very deeply, not very interestingly, on the manysidedness of human emotions. Macbeth asks:

> Who can be wise, amaz'd, temperate and furious,
> Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man,

he says; but, perhaps, as truly it might be answered, "Every man — in his own heart." At any rate, we may certainly mourn and rejoice over the same event, and Montaigne, after his wont, brings forward countless anecdotes to prove this.

The motif of the Essay would seem to have been suggested by three passages in Plutarch: that about Antigonus in the Life of Pyrrhus, about Cæsar in the Life of Pompey, and about Timoleon in his Life.

Some touches of personal portraiture are found here: his emotions on leaving home, and when he scolds his valet, and when he scolds himself. In a later Essay ("On Anger") he gives a further account of his angers, and says: "Sometimes, too, it happens that I pretend to be angry, for the management of my household, without any real emotion."

In several compilations of the sixteenth century may be found lists of similar facts, but nowhere treated with the same depth of intelligence.

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[1] The cause of the conqueror was approved by the gods, but that of the conquered by Cato. — Lucan, *Pharsalia*, I, 128.

[2] And the whole world was under subjection save the haughty spirit of Cato. — Horace, *Odes*, II, 1.23.

[3] *Les noms*. Cotgrave, *sub verbo* "nom": "a fame, bruit, report; whence, *Il en a le nom*."

[4] These ruled by Cato. — Virgil, *Æneid*, VIII, 670.

WHEN we learn in the histories that Antigonus was much displeased with his son for having brought to him the head of Pyrrhus, his foe, who had that very hour been slain while fighting against him, and that, when he looked upon it, he wept bitterly;[1] and that Duke René of Lorraine also lamented the death of Duke Charles of Burgundy,[2] whom he had just defeated, and wore mourning for him at his burial; and that, at the battle of Auroy,[3] which the Count of Montfort won against Charles of Blois, the victor, coming across the dead body of his enemy, greatly mourned over it, we must not hastily exclaim: —

> Et cosi aven che l'animo ciascuna
> Sua passion sotto el contrario manto
> Ricopre, con la vista hor' chiara hor' bruna.[4]

When Pompey's head was brought to Cæsar, it is told in histories that he turned his eyes away as from a hateful and unpleasant sight.[5] There had been between them so long-continued an understanding and association in the management of public affairs; so much community of fortune; so many reciprocal duties from their alliance, that it must not be thought that Cæsar's bearing was wholly false and assumed, as this poet judges: —

> tutumque putavit
> Jam bonus esse socer; lachrimas non sponte cadentes
> Effudit, gemitusque expressit pectore læto.[6]

For, although in truth most of our acts are merely deceptive and of false colour,[7] and it may sometimes be true that

[1] See Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus*.

[2] Charles the Bold, killed in 1477, at Nancy.

[3] In 1364; see Froissart.

[4] And so it happens that every soul covers over its emotions with an unlike mantle, with a visage now bright, now dark. — Petrarch, *Sonnet* 81.

[5] See Plutarch, *Life of Cæsar*, and *Life of Pompey*.

[6] And now he thought he could with safety appear like a kind father-in-law; he shed tears that did not flow of themselves, and forced groans from a joyful heart. — Lucan, IX, 1037.

[7] *Ne soient que masque et fard.*

Hæredis fletus sub persona risus est,[1]

still, in judging of these incidents, we must consider how our souls are often agitated by diverse emotions. And just as there is, they say, in our bodies an assemblage of diverse humours, of which that one is sovereign which usually rules within us, according to our temperaments, so, in our souls, although there are diverse impulses which agitate them, yet it must be that one of these remains master of the field. But it is not with such complete advantage that, by reason of the volubility and activity of our souls, the weaker humours may not now and then regain the ground, and make a brief charge in their turn. Wherefore it is that not only do we see children, who artlessly follow nature, cry and laugh often at the same thing, but no man of us can boast — whatever journey he may be taking for his pleasure — that on leaving his family and friends he does not feel his heart tremble; and, if tears do not quite fall from his eyes, at least he puts foot in the stirrup with a pensive and saddened countenance. And despite the gentle flame that warms the hearts of well-born maids, they must be drawn unwillingly from their mothers' arms, to be given to their husbands, whatever this good companion may say: —

Estne novis nuptis odio Venus, anne parentum
Frustrantur falsis gaudia lachrimulis,
Ubertim thalami quas intra limina fundunt?
Non, ita me divi, vera gemunt, juverint.[2]

Likewise it is not a strange thing to lament when dead a man whom one would not call back to life.

(*b*) When I chide my servant, I do it with the best heart I have; my imprecations are genuine and not feigned; but, that fit of anger blown over, let him have need of me, and I will gladly do him a kindness: I turn the leaf instanter. (*c*) When I call him a dolt, a calf, I do not intend to fasten

[1] The tears of an heir are smiles behind a mask. — Publius Syrus, in Aulus Gellius, XVII, 14.

[2] Is Venus really hateful to young brides, or do they check their parents' gladness with those feigned tears which they shed abundantly on the threshold of their chamber? Not true lamentations are these, so may the gods help me! — Catullus, LXVI, 15.

those titles on him forever, nor do I think that I contradict myself if, soon after, I dub him an excellent fellow. No one quality wholly and entirely embraces us. If it were not behaving like an idiot to talk when alone, there is scarcely a day or an hour when I might not be heard growling to myself and against myself: "Scum of a fool!" [1] And yet I do not mean that that is my exact description. (*b*) The man who, seeing my manner toward my wife now cold and now loving, thinks that the one or the other deportment was feigned, is a fool. Nero, taking leave of his mother whom he was sending to be drowned, was none the less moved by that maternal farewell, and was stirred to horror and pity.[2]

(*a*) 'Tis said that the light of the sun is not continuous, but that it incessantly flashes its beams upon us so closely one after another that we can not detect the interval between them.

> (*b*) Largus enim liquidi fons luminis, ætherius sol
> Inrigat assidue cœlum candore recenti,
> Suppeditatque novo confestim lumine lumen.[3]

In like manner the soul gives forth its rays diversely and imperceptibly.

(*c*) Artabanus took unawares Xerxes, his nephew, and chid him for the sudden change of his countenance. He was observing the immeasurable greatness of his forces crossing the Hellespont: at first he felt a thrill of joy to see so many thousands of men in his service, and manifested it by the cheerfulness and animation of his face; and all suddenly, in one instant, as it came into his mind that all those lives would be no more in a hundred years at furthest, he knitted his brow and was saddened even to tears.[4] (*a*) We have sought with relentless determination revenge for an insult, and have been conscious of a peculiar satisfaction in our victory, and yet we weep over it. It is not for our victory

[1] *Bran du fat.*

[2] See Tacitus, *Annals*, XIV, 4. But Tacitus evidently doubts Nero's sincerity.

[3] For the brilliant sun, the abundant fount of fluid light, continually bathes the sky with fresh radiance and furnishes light by ever-renewed light. — Lucretius, V, 281.

[4] See Herodotus, VII, 45, *et seq.*; Valerius Maximus, IX, 13, *ext.* 1.

that we weep; there is no change in that; but our soul regards the thing with a different eye, and represents it to itself in another aspect; for every thing has many sides and can be seen from many points of view. Kinship, former acquaintances, and friendships lay hold of our imagination and perturb it for the moment, according to their nature; but its[1] change of direction is so rapid that we do not perceive it.

(*b*) Nil adeo fieri celeri ratione videtur
Quam sibi mens fieri proponit et inchoat ipsa.
Ocius ergo animus quam res se perciet ulla,
Ante oculos quarum in promptu natura videtur.[2]

(*a*) And consequently we deceive ourselves in attempting to make a continuous body of all this succession of ideas. When Timoleon weeps for the murder that he had committed after such mature and noble-hearted deliberation, he does not weep for the tyrant, but he weeps for his brother.[3] One half of his duty is performed; let us allow him to perform the other half.

CHAPTER XXXIX

OF SOLITUDE

The longer Essays are almost without exception the most interesting; and this is one to be read and re-read. Not that there is any profound or original thought in it, and it is very often diffuse; but the thought is never trivial and the phrase is never commonplace. It is the expression — as intimate as it is simple — of the mind of one of our fellow men, whom it would be a pleasure to resemble.

He begins by questioning what it is that makes us desire solitude, and remarks that if it be "to live more at leisure and at ease," we do not always choose the right path. "We carry our fetters with us. . . . Our sickness is of the soul. . . . Let us win from ourselves the power to live alone in good earnest and thus to live at our ease." This thought he enlarges upon in the passage on the next page (319) beginning: We "must have wives, children," and closing with the noble phrase that the

[1] That is, the imagination's.

[2] Nothing is seen to move so rapidly as the mind when it proposes and undertakes something. The mind is swifter than any visible thing that is seen by the eyes in nature. — Lucretius, III, 182.

[3] See Plutarch, *Life of Timoleon;* Diodorus Siculus, XVI, 65.

soul "can be its own company: it has the means of attack and of defence, of giving and of receiving." It has been said of this Essay, —

> Il m'enseigne à n'avoir affection pour rien;
> De toutes amitiés il détache mon âme.

But, in truth, that is not its spirit. It is not addressed to men in active life; it speaks to, and of, those to whom solitude is becoming, for whom it is reasonable "to take leave of society betimes"; and it is not the counsel of selfishness, but of generosity, when he declares: "The greatest thing in the world is to know how to belong to oneself."

Nowhere can be found nobler moral precepts than here. The passage beginning about "the beggar at my door" shows the dramatic philosophising which was one of Montaigne's most characteristic qualities. He was constantly essaying to put his mind into the mind of another, to *chausser son biais*, and evidently felt it to be a strengthening exercise.

The last two pages are a sort of *cento*, paraphrasing, more or less, passages from two or three of Seneca's letters, and phrases from Epicurus. Throughout the whole Essay are embedded thoughts to be found in Seneca's writings which, passing through Montaigne's mind, take his imprint, so that the analogous passages in Seneca can not be precisely referred to; but a reader familiar with the two writers recognises the strong resemblance.

His remarks about the occupations that suit a solitary life are full of good sense.

LET us leave on one side this tedious comparison between a solitary and an active life; and as for that fine sentence under which ambition and avidity protect themselves, that "we are not born for ourselves alone, but for the public,"[1] let us boldly refer ourselves to those who are in the whirl, and let them beat their breasts[2] if, on the contrary, dignities, offices, and the needless toil of the world, are not sought chiefly to derive from the public a man's private profit. The evil methods by which men push themselves forward clearly indicate that the end is worth no more than the means. Let us answer on behalf of ambition that it is she herself who gives us the taste for solitude; for what does she avoid so much as society? what does she seek so much as elbow-room? Everywhere it is possible to do good and ill; none the less, if the saying of Bias be true, that the

[1] See Lucan, II, 383. Lucan is speaking of Cato of Utica.

[2] *Qu'ils se battent la conscience.* "Analogue," says M. Villey, "à 'se frappe la poitrine.'"

worst men are the greater number,[1] or what *Ecclesiasticus* says, that in a thousand there is not one good,[2] —

(*b*) Rari quippe boni: numero vix sunt totidem, quot
Thebarum portæ, vel divitis ostia Nili,[3] —

(*a*) there is great danger of contagion in a crowd. We can not help imitating the vicious or else hating them. There is danger, because they are numerous, of resembling them; and, because they are unlike us, of hating them much.[4] (*c*) And the merchants who travel by sea are wise to look to it that those who sail on the same ship are neither dissolute nor blasphemers nor wicked men, esteeming such company unlucky. Wherefore Bias jocosely said to those who incurred with him the perils of a great storm and called on the gods for aid: "Hush! don't let them know that you are here with me." [5] And, a more striking example, Albuquerque, viceroy in India for King Emmanuel of Portugal, being in extreme peril at sea, took a young boy on his shoulders, with the sole object that, in the companionship of their peril, his innocence might serve himself as warrant, and as recommendation to the divine favour to put him in safety.[6]

(*a*) It is not that the wise man can not live content everywhere, aye, and alone, in the throng of a palace; but if he has his choice, he will shun, he says, even the sight of a crowd; he will endure the one, if need be; but if it rests with him, he will choose the other.[7] It does not seem to him that he is sufficiently purged of vices, if he must continue to contend with those of others. (*b*) Charondas punished

[1] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Bias*.

[2] *Ecclesiastes* (not *Ecclesiasticus*), VII, 28.

[3] For good men are rare; hardly are they more in number than the gates of Thebes or the mouths of the rich Nile. — Juvenal, XIII, 26. Probably taken by Montaigne from George Buchanan's *De Jure Regni Scotorum*.

[4] *Toutes les deux sont dangereux; et de leur ressembler par ce qu'ils sont beaucoup, et d'en haïr beaucoup, par ce qu'ils sont dissemblables*. See Seneca, *Epistle* 7.8.

[5] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Bias*.

[6] Taken from Goulard's French translation of Bishop Osorio's *History of Portugal* (Latin).

[7] See Seneca, *Epistle* 28.6, 7.

as bad men those who were convicted of frequenting bad company.[1]

(*c*) There is nothing so unsociable and so sociable as man, in the one case by reason of his corruption, in the other by his nature. And Antisthenes does not seem to me to have answered satisfactorily him who blamed him for intercourse with bad men, by saying that physicians live well among the sick;[2] for if they are of benefit to the health of the sick, they impair their own by contagion, and by constantly seeing and dealing with diseases.

(*a*) Now the object of all, so I believe, is the same — to live more at leisure and at ease. But we do not always intelligently seek the pathway to this end. Often we think that we have abandoned affairs when we have only changed them. There is little less trouble in the management of a family than of a great establishment; wherever the mind is busied, it is wholly so; and because domestic preoccupations are less important, they are not less importunate. Consequently, because we are quit of the court and the market-place, we are not quit of the chief torments of our life, —

ratio et prudentia curas,
Non locus effusi late maris arbiter, aufert.[3]

Ambition, avarice, irresolution, fear, and all greedy desires do not desert us when we change our abiding-place: —

Et
Post equitem sedet atra cura.[4]

They often follow us even into cloisters and schools of philosophy. Neither deserts, nor caverns, nor fasting, rid us of them;

Hæret lateri letalis arundo.[5]

[1] See Diodorus Siculus, XII, 4. M. Villey thinks it probable that Montaigne found this fact elsewhere than in Diodorus. See his *Les Sources et l'Évolution des Essais*, I, 115.

[2] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Antisthenes*.

[3] It is reason and wisdom that banish care; not a place commanding a prospect of the widespread sea. — Horace, *Epistles*, I, 2.25.

[4] And gloomy care sits behind the rider. — Idem, *Odes*, III, 1.40.

[5] The deadly arrow remains fixed in her side. — Virgil, *Æneid*, IV, 73.

Socrates was told that a certain person had not changed for the better in his travels. "I must believe it," said he, "for he carried himself with him." [1]

Quid terras alio calentes
Sole mutamus? patria quis exul
Se quoque fugit? [2]

If a man do not first relieve himself and his soul from the burden that weighs it down, movement will cause it to press the more; as in a ship the cargo is less troublesome when it is stable.[3] You do more harm than good to the sick man by making him change his place; you bottle up the disease [4] by moving it, as stakes are driven deeper and more firmly by wriggling and shaking them.[5] Therefore it is not enough to separate oneself from the common people; it is not enough to change one's place; we must separate ourselves from the common conditions that are within us; we must sequester ourselves and regain ourselves.

(*b*) Rupi jam vincula dicas:
Nam luctata canis nodum arripit; attamen illi,
Cum fugit, a collo trahitur pars longa catenæ.[6]

We carry our fetters with us; it is not complete liberty; we still turn our eyes toward what we have left; our thoughts are full of it.

Nisi purgatum est pectus, quæ prœlia nobis
Atque pericula tunc ingratis insinuandum?
Quantæ conscindunt hominem cuppedinis acres
Sollicitum curæ, quantique perinde timores?

[1] See Seneca, *Epistle* 104.7.

[2] Why seek we regions warmed by another sun? Who, departing from his native land, escapes from himself as well? — Horace, *Odes*, II, 16.18.

[3] See Seneca, *Epistle* 28.3.

[4] *Vous ensachez le mal.*

[5] *En les branlant et secouant;* this curious statement was added in the edition of 1582.

[6] "I have broken my chains," you will say. Yet the dog that, by straining, has broken the knot, drags at his neck, when he escapes, a long piece of his chain. — Persius, *Satires*, V, 158.

Quidve superbia, spurcitia, ac petulantia? quantas
Efficiunt clades? quid luxus desidiæque? [1]

(*a*) Our sickness is of the soul; now the soul can not escape from itself.

In culpa est animus qui se non effugit unquam.[2]

So we must bring it home and withdraw into ourselves.[3] That is true solitude, and it may be enjoyed in the midst of cities and of kings' courts; but it is enjoyed more fitly in private. Now, when we undertake to live alone and to do without companionship, let us see to it that our contentment depends on ourselves; let us cut loose from all ties that bind us to others; let us win from ourselves the power to live alone in good earnest and thus to live at our ease.

Stilpo having escaped from the conflagration of his city, in which he had lost wife, children, and substance, Demetrius Poliorcetes, seeing him with undaunted mien notwithstanding the utter ruin of his country, asked him if he had met with no loss. He answered no, and that, thanks to God, he had lost nothing belonging to him.[4] (*c*) It was to the same effect that the philosopher Antisthenes said jestingly that men should supply themselves with provisions that would float on the water, and could thus escape from shipwreck with them.[5]

(*a*) Surely the wise man has lost nothing if he has himself. When the city of Nola was ruined by the barbarians, Paulinus, who was bishop there, having lost every thing, and being their prisoner, prayed to God thus: "O Lord, preserve me from feeling this loss, for thou knowest that they

[1] If we do not purge our breasts, what battles and perils must then find their way thither in despite of us! What sharp anxiety rends the man who is agitated by lust! How many fears! What disasters are wrought by pride and uncleanliness and malice, by luxury and sloth! — Lucretius, V, 43.

[2] The soul is at fault which never escapes from itself. — Horace, *Epistles*, I, 14.13. Translated by Montaigne before quoting.

[3] *Ainsin il la faut ramener et retirer en soi.* See Seneca, *De Tranquillitate Animi*, XIV, and *Epistle* 7.8.

[4] See Idem, *Epistle* 9.18, and *De Constantia Sapientis*, V; Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Stilpo*.

[5] See Idem, *Life of Antisthenes*.

have not indeed touched any thing that is mine." [1] The riches that made him rich, and the goods that made him good were still intact. See what it is to choose wisely the treasures which are guaranteed from harm, and to hide them in a place where no one may go, and which can not be betrayed but by ourselves. All of us who can must have wives, children, property, and, above all, health; but not be so attached to them that our happiness depends on them; we must reserve for ourselves a private room, all our own, subject to no one,[2] in which we may establish our true freedom and our principal retreat and solitude. Therein we must customarily converse with ourselves, and so inwardly that no outside commerce or communication may there find place; we must there examine things and make merry over them, as if without wife and children and worldly goods, without retinue and servants, so that, if the cause of their loss shall come to pass, it may be no new thing to us to do without them. We have a soul that can be turned to itself; it can be its own company; it has the means of attack and of defence, of giving and of receiving. Let us not fear the becoming dull in this solitude from wearisome inactivity;

(*b*) in solis sis tibi turba locis.[3]

(*c*) Virtue, says Antisthenes, is content by itself, without rules, without words, without deeds.[4]

(*a*) In our wonted actions there is not one in a thousand that concerns ourselves. He whom you see clambering up the ruins of yonder wall, frantic and beside himself, a target for so many gun-shots; and that other, all scarred, exhausted, and pale with hunger, resolved to be cut to pieces rather than open the gate — think you that they are there on their own account? It is for one, perhaps, whom they never saw and who gives himself no concern about their deeds, sunk meanwhile in inactivity and pleasures. That

[1] See St. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, I, 10.

[2] *Une arriere-boutique toute nostre, toute franche.*

[3] In lonely places be to yourself a multitude. — Tibullus, IV, 13.12. Montaigne adapted this line to his purpose; the original reads: *in solis tu mihi turba locis.*

[4] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Antisthenes.*

man, snuffling, snivelling, and blear-eyed,[1] whom you see come from a study after midnight—do you think that he is searching in books how he shall make himself a better man, happier and wiser? Nothing of the sort.[2] He will die at it, or will instruct posterity about the metre of the verses of Plautus and the true orthography of a Latin word. Who does not readily exchange health, tranquillity, and life for fame and glory, the most useless, hollow, and false coin that we use? Our own death not causing us enough fear, let us burden ourselves also with the death of our wives, our children, and our servants. Our own affairs not giving us trouble enough, let us take upon ourselves to worry and cudgel our brains over those of our neighbours and friends.

> Vah! quemquamne hominem in animum instituere, aut
> Parare, quod sit charius quam ipse est sibi? [3]

(*c*) Solitude seems to me to have most fitness and reasonableness for those who have given to the world their most active and vigorous years, after the example of Thales.[4] (*a*) We have lived enough for others; let us live for ourselves at least this latter end of our life; let us bring our thoughts and our purposes home to ourselves, and for our full content.[5] It is no easy matter to effect our withdrawal completely; it gives us enough to do without mingling other undertakings with it. Since God gives us leisure to order our own flitting, let us prepare for it; let us pack our trunks, and let us take leave of society betimes; let us deliver ourselves from those violent seizures [6] which drag us elsewhere and carry us away from ourselves. We must cut loose from those strong bonds, and henceforth love this or that, but espouse nothing but ourselves; that is to say: all else may belong to us, but not so combined and united with us that it can not be detached without flaying us, and tear-

[1] *Tout pituiteux, chassieux et crasseux.*

[2] *Nulles nouvelles.*

[3] What! can any man take it into his head to hold any thing dearer than himself? — Terence, *Adelphi*, I, 1.13.

[4] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Thales.*

[5] *A nostre aise.*

[6] *Prinses.*

ing off with it a part of our flesh.[1] The greatest thing in the world is to know how to belong to oneself.

(*c*) It is time to cut loose from society when we can contribute nothing to it; let him who can not lend refrain from borrowing. Our powers are failing; let us draw them in and concentrate them in ourselves. He who can pour into himself and mingle together the duties of friendship and of society, let him do so. In this fallen estate, which makes him useless and burdensome and troublesome to others, let him beware that he be not to himself troublesome and burdensome and useless. Let him flatter and caress and, above all, govern himself, respecting and fearing his reason and his conscience, so that he can not without shame stumble in their presence. *Rarum est enim ut satis se quisque vereatur.*[2] Socrates says that young men should seek instruction, grown men should practise doing good, old men should withdraw from all civil and military employments and live as they please, without being bound to any definite duty.[3]

(*a*) There are some temperaments better adapted than others to these precepts of withdrawal from the world. They who are weak and slow of apprehension,[4] and who have a fastidious disposition and will, which is not easily subjected or made use of, — of whom I am one both by nature and by judgement, — will better bend to this opinion than those active and busy minds who grasp every thing and pledge themselves on all sides; who are passionately interested in all things; who offer themselves, who come forward and give themselves at every opportunity. We should make use of these accidental, outside pleasures, in so far as they are agreeable to us, but should not make them our principal support. They are not that; neither reason nor nature will have it so. Why should we, against their laws, subject our contentment to the authority of others? To anticipate thus the accidents of fortune; to deprive our-

[1] See Seneca, *Epistle* 74.

[2] For it is a rare thing for a man to have sufficient deference for himself. — Quintilian, X, 7.24.

[3] The source of this is unknown. A passage in Stobæus was cited first by Coste, later by Le Clerc; but M. Villey, in his Notes to the *Édition Municipale*, points out the unsatisfactoriness of this reference.

[4] That is, in the faculty of grasping with the intellect a new idea.

selves of the pleasures that are in our hands, as many have done from religious zeal, and some philosophers from reasoning; to wait upon oneself; to sleep on a hard bed; to put out one's eyes; [1] to throw one's worldly goods into the river; [2] to seek pain (as some do, by means of suffering in this life, to acquire happiness in another; others, by placing themselves on the lowest step, to make themselves safe from an unlooked-for fall) — all these are the actions of excessive virtue. Stouter and stronger natures make their very withdrawal glorious and worthy of imitation.

> Tuta et parvula laudo,
> Cum res deficiunt, satis inter vilia fortis:
> Verum, ubi quid melius contingit et unctius, idem
> Hos sapere, et solos aio bene vivere, quorum
> Conspicitur nitidis fundata pecunia villis.[3]

I have enough to do without going so far; it suffices me, when favoured by fortune, to prepare myself for her disfavour; and, when at ease, to represent to myself the evil to come, so far as the imagination can attain thereto; [4] just as we train ourselves by jousts and tournaments, and make mimic war in time of perfect peace.

(*c*) I do not think Arcesilaus the philosopher the less austere because I know that he used utensils of gold and silver as far as his means permitted; and I think more highly of him than if he had parted with them, since he used them unpretendingly and generously.[5] (*a*) I see the full scope of the need arising from natural conditions;[6] and, as I consider the

[1] The allusion is to Democritus.

[2] The allusion is to Crates.

[3] When possessions fail me, I praise quietness and humbleness, courageous enough among things of little value; but when there comes to me something better and more delicate, I, the very same man, say that those only are wise and live happily, whose fortune is seen to be well placed in fertile lands. — Horace, *Epistles*, I, 15.42. Montaigne changed *Vos* to *Hos* in the penultimate verse.

[4] See Seneca, *Epistle* 28.6.

[5] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Arcesilaus*. The philosopher was generous with his "utensils" in that he used to lend them to his friends; and when they were poor, he did not reclaim them. Cf. Seneca, *Epistle* 5.6.

[6] *Je voy jusques à quels limites va la necessité naturelle.*

poor beggar at my door, often more jovial and healthier than myself, I set myself in his place, I try to put my soul into his shoes.[1] And running in like manner over other examples, although I imagine death, poverty, contempt, and sickness to be at my heels, I easily resolve not to be alarmed by what a lesser man than I takes with such patience. And I can not believe that the inferiority of understanding avails more than strength, or that the effects of reasoning may not attain to the effects of accustomedness. And knowing how insecure these outside advantages are, I do not fail, in full enjoyment of them, to implore God, as my chief prayer, that he will make me satisfied with myself alone, and with the resources that are born within me. I see hale and hearty young men who never fail to carry in their boxes a quantity of pills to use when a cold lies heavy on them, which they fear the less, thinking that they have its remedy at hand. So it is well to do; and still more, if we feel subject to some more serious malady, to supply ourselves with those drugs which quiet and put to sleep the enemy.

The occupation to be chosen for such a life[2] should be an occupation neither laborious nor tedious; otherwise, it is for naught that we have undertaken to resort to it for repose. It depends on every man's individual taste; mine is in no wise inclined to household cares. They who like them should give themselves to them in moderation, —

Conentur sibi res, non se submittere rebus.[3]

The management of house and lands[4] is otherwise a servile business, as Sallust calls it;[5] it has some branches more justifiable than others, as the oversight of gardens, which Xenophon ascribes to Cyrus;[6] and there may be found a mean between that low and abject oversight, widely ex-

[1] *J'essaye de chausser mon ame à son biaiz.*

[2] This seems to connect with the passage on page 322, ending "glorious and worthy of imitation."

[3] Let them strive to subordinate things to themselves, not themselves to things. — Horace, *Epistles*, I, 1.19. The original reads: *Et mihi res, non me rebus, subjungere conor.*

[4] *La mesnagerie.*

[5] See Sallust, *Catiline*, IV.

[6] See Xenophon, *Œconomicus*, I, 20; Cicero, *De Senectute*, XVII.

tended and full of perplexity, that we see in men who are wholly plunged in it, and that profound and extreme indifference, letting every thing go at random, that we see in others.

Democriti pecus edit agellos
Cultaque, dum peregre est animus, sine corpore velox.[1]

But let us hear the advice that the younger Pliny gives to his friend Cornelius Rufus on this subject of solitude: "I advise you, in that complete and idle seclusion[2] in which you live, to leave to your servants the base and sordid domestic cares, and to devote yourself to the study of letters, to derive therefrom something that will be all your own."[3] He means reputation: a thought akin to that of Cicero, who says that he desires to employ his solitude and his leisure from public affairs in acquiring immortality by means of his writings.[4]

(*b*) Usque adeo ne
Scire tuum nihil est, nisi te scire hoc sciat alter?[5]

(*c*) It seems to me that it is wise, when one talks of withdrawing from the world, to look away from it. These men only half do this; they frame their arrangements very well for the time when they will be no longer there; but the profit of their determination they think still to draw from the world, — they themselves being absent, — by an absurd inconsistency. The conception those have who seek solitude from religious devotion, filling their hearts with the certainty of the divine promises in the other life, is much more sanely devised. They look forward to God — an object infinite both in goodness and in power. The soul has wherewith to satisfy its desires in entire liberty. To such,

[1] Herds devour the fields and the harvests of Democritus, whilst his swift disembodied mind is far away. — Horace, *Epistles*, I, 12.12.

[2] *En cette pleine et grasse retraite.*

[3] Pliny, *Epistles*, I, 3. The name of his correspondent was *Caninius* Rufus.

[4] See Cicero, *Orator*, XLIII.

[5] Is knowledge nothing to you, unless others know of your knowledge? — Persius, *Satires*, I, 23.

afflictions, sorrows are profitable, being employed in the acquisition of everlasting health and enjoyment; death is to be desired — the passage into a so perfect condition. The harshness of their rules is, as soon as may be, softened by accustomedness; and the carnal appetites repelled and dulled by their denial, for nothing maintains them but habit and exercise. This sole aim of another, happily immortal, life justly deserves that we should give up the satisfactions and charms of this life of ours; and he who can in truth and constantly enkindle his soul with the flame of this living faith and hope creates for himself in solitude a life pleasurable and delicious beyond every other way of life.

(*a*) Neither the end, therefore, nor the manner of this advice [1] pleases me: we go continually from bad to worse.[2] This occupation with books is as laborious as any other, and as great a foe to the health, which should be chiefly considered. And we must not let ourselves be deluded by the pleasure that we take in it; it is the same pleasure that ruins the administrator of domestic affairs,[3] the avaricious, the pleasure-loving, and the ambitious. Wise men sufficiently instruct us to beware of the treachery of our appetites, and to distinguish true and perfect pleasures from pleasures which are blended and diversified with more pain; for most pleasures, they say, touch us gently and embrace us, only to strangle us, as was the wont of those whom the Egyptians called Philistas.[4] If the headache came before drunkenness, we should beware of drinking too much; but enjoyment, to deceive us, goes in front and hides from us its companions. Books are agreeable, but if, by consorting with them, we end by losing vivacity and health, our best possessions, let us get rid of them. I am of those who think that their fruit can not counterbalance that loss. As men who have long felt themselves to be enfeebled by sickness place themselves at last at the mercy of medicine, and have determined for them

[1] That is, the advice of Pliny to C. Rufus, to devote himself to the study of letters.

[2] *Nous retombons toujours de fièvre en chaud mal.*

[3] *Le mesnagier.*

[4] See Seneca, *Epistle* 51.13. Properly *Philetas* (Φιλήτας).

by science certain rules of living not to be departed from, so he who withdraws, wearied and disgusted, from life in common, should shape his new life according to the rules of reason, should order and arrange it with premeditation and judgement. He should have taken leave of every sort of toil, whatever aspect it may wear, and should shun, in general, those passions which impede the tranquillity of the body and of the mind, (*b*) and choose the path which is most in accordance with his judgement: —

Unusquisque sua noverit ire via.[1]

(*a*) In domestic affairs,[2] in study, in hunting, and every other pursuit, we must go to the very last limits of enjoyment, and be on our guard against pledging ourselves further where trouble begins to be mingled with it. We must retain of busyness and occupation only so much as is needed to keep us in breath, and to guarantee us from the discomforts which the other extreme — a feeble and torpid idleness — brings in its train. There are sterile and thorny kinds of knowledge, devised mostly for the multitude; they must be left to those who are in the service of the world. I myself like, among books, only those that are amusing and easy, that move me with pleasure, or that comfort me and advise[3] me how to order my life and my death: —

Tacitum sylvas inter reptare salubres,
Curantem quidquid dignum sapiente bonoque est.[4]

Wiser men can create for themselves a wholly spiritual peace, having strong and vigorous souls; I, having a more ordinary one, must be helped by bodily comforts to sustain myself; and age having lately stolen from me those which were most to my liking, I train and whet my appetite for those remaining more adapted to this other time of life. We must hold on with all our strength[5] to the enjoyment of the

[1] Each man will choose to go his own way. — Propertius, II, 25.38. Montaigne translates the line before quoting.

[2] *Au mesnage.*

[3] *Consolent et conseillent.*

[4] To stroll silently through health-giving woods, meditating on what is worthy a wise and virtuous man. — Horace, *Epistles*, I, 4.4.

[5] *A tous nos dents et nos griffes.*

pleasures of life, which our years tear from our grasp one after another:[1] —

(*b*) Carpamus dulcia; nostrum est
Quod vivis: cinis et manes et fabula fies.[2]

(*a*) Now, as for the goal of renown that Pliny and Cicero propose to us, it is very far from my reckoning. The humour most opposed to retirement is ambition: renown and repose are things that can not lodge in the same dwelling. In my eyes, they[3] have only their arms and legs unconstrained; their minds, their purposes are more than ever in bonds.

(*b*) Tun, vetule, auriculis alienis colligis escas?[4]

(*a*) They have drawn back, only the better to leap, and by a more vigorous movement to make a livelier charge into the troop. Will you see how they shoot a trifle short? Let us weigh the advice of two philosophers,[5] belonging to two very different sects, writing to their friends, the one to Idomeneus, the other to Lucilius, to induce them to withdraw from the management of affairs, and from great positions, to solitude. You have (they say) lived swimming and floating until now — come into port to die; you have spent the rest of your life in the light, spend this in the shade.[6] It is impossible to abandon your occupations if you do not abandon their profits; for this reason put aside all care of fame and renown.[7] There is danger that the lustre of your past actions may throw only too much light upon you and follow you even into your cave; abandon, with other pleasures, that which comes from the approbation of others.[8] And as

[1] The edition of 1580 adds: *et les alonger de toute nostre puissance.*
Quamcunque Deus tibi fortunaverit horam,
Grata sume manu, nec dulcia differ in annum.

[2] Let us pluck pleasures; life is all that is ours; soon you will be ashes, a shade, a mere name. — Persius, *Satires*, V, 151.

[3] That is, the ambitious, in solitude.

[4] Is it for you, old fool, to cater to the ears of assembled strangers? — *Ibid.*, I, 22.

[5] Epicurus and Seneca.

[6] See Seneca, *Epistle* 19.2.

[7] See Idem, *Epistle* 22.9.

[8] See Idem, *Epistle* 19.4.

for your much learning,[1] take no thought of that; it will not lose its value if you profit better by it yourself.[2] Remember him who, when some one asked him to what end he in his art took such pains as could come to the knowledge of few persons, replied: "Few are enough for me; one is enough; not one is enough."[3] He spoke truly; you and a companion are theatre enough one for the other, or you alone for yourself.[4] Let all the world be to you as one person, and one person be to you as all the world.[5] It is a beggarly ambition to seek to derive renown from one's idleness and one's hiding-place; one must do like the animals, who efface their tracks at the mouth of their den.[6] It should no longer be your concern to make the world speak of you, but how you should speak to yourself.[7] Withdraw into yourself, but first prepare to receive yourself; it would be madness to trust yourself to yourself if you do not know how to govern yourself; it is possible to err in solitude no less than in society.[8] Until you have made yourself a man before whom you would not dare to stumble; and until you are bashful and respectful before yourself, (*c*) *observentur species honestæ animo*,[9] (*a*) keep always present in thought Cato, Phocion, and Aristides, in whose presence even fools would hide their faults, and make them the guides of all your purposes. If these go astray, your veneration for those men will put them in the path again; it will keep you in the way to be content with yourself, to detain and fix your mind upon certain definite reflections in which it can take pleasure; and having perceived the true blessings, which are enjoyed as soon as they are perceived, to content yourself with them, without desire for length of days or for fame. Such is the counsel of a true and sincere philosophy, not of an ostentatious and verbose philosophy as is that of the first two.[10]

[1] *Science et suffisance.*
[2] See Seneca, *Epistle* 7.9.
[3] See Idem, *Epistle* 7.11.
[4] See *Ibid.*
[5] See Idem, *Epistle* 7.10. Seneca attributes this saying to Democritus.
[6] See Idem, *Epistle* 68.
[7] See *Ibid.*
[8] See Idem, *Epistle* 25.5.
[9] Let noble images be present to your mind. — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, II, 22.
[10] Pliny and Cicero.

CHAPTER XL

REFLECTION CONCERNING CICERO

The first sentence refers to the preceding Essay, in which he has compared the philosophy, the principles, of Cicero and Pliny (the Younger) with those of Seneca and Epicurus; and there is hardly more about Cicero in this present Essay than in the other. The first pages are taken up (more or less consecutively) with the thesis that it is not well for an eminent man to excel in matters which are not suitable to his position, and, as a corollary, that the perfection of writing well adds little to a man's greatness. That is, that the most beautiful style is of value only for what it expresses. What would modern writers say to this?

That this was Montaigne's sincere opinion is certain, but it is no less certain that it was modified in his own mind, in a way he does not here note, by a singularly exquisite perception of the beauty of artistically used language. He says elsewhere (Book III, chapter 5): "When I behold those noble modes of expression, so vivid, so profound, I do not say this is speaking rightly, I say it is thinking rightly."

And it was because the thought seemed to him far more valuable than the expression, that he disliked (as he says in this Essay) to hear the language of his own Essays praised. (This is, of course, a passage inserted after the first edition.) The pleasant boast that follows, that no writer has filled his pages with solider or more abundant matter, is so true that it is not lacking in dignity; and the remarks about the stories and the quotations that he makes use of indicate how important it is for his reader to read *between the lines*. The reward is great for "those who may fall in with my way of thinking."

The last three pages of this Essay are one of the very interesting passages of self-*description;* and there is here one of the touching references to his dead friend La Boëtie, when he speaks of his lack of such companionship as he once had had, of intercourse which would lead him on, uphold him, and lift him up: *Le commerce qui m'attirast, me soustinst et souslevast.*

ONE word more in the comparison of these couples.[1] There may be drawn from the writings of Cicero and of this Pliny — who, in my opinion, bears little resemblance to the character of his uncle — innumerable proofs of natures ambitious beyond measure: among others, that before the whole world they entreat the historians of their time not to forget them in their chron-

[1] That is, Pliny and Cicero on the one side, Seneca and Epicurus on the other.

icles;[1] and Fortune, as if in spite, has caused the vanity of those requests to endure to our day, and long ago consigned any such mention to oblivion.[2] But it goes beyond utter low-mindedness in persons of such standing to have desired to derive great glory from babble and prating, even to making use of private letters written to their friends; so that, some of them having failed to be sent in due season, the writers none the less have them published, with the noble excuse that they wish not to lose their work and their vigils. Does it not well become two Roman consuls, highest rulers of the republic that is empress of the world, to employ their leisure in devising and prettily composing an eloquent letter, to derive therefrom the reputation of being perfectly versed in their mother-tongue? What worse could a mere schoolmaster do, who might earn his living by it? If the deeds of Xenophon and Cæsar had not very far surpassed their eloquence, I do not believe that they would ever have written of them; they strove to turn attention, not to their sayings, but to their doings.[3] And if the perfection of writing well could confer any glory befitting a great man, surely Scipio and Lælius would not have resigned the credit for their comedies, and for all the daintinesses and delightfulnesses of the Latin language to an African bondman; for that this work was theirs, its beauty and its excellence sufficiently declare, and Terence himself admits it;[4] (*b*) and I should be sorry if I were obliged to abandon that belief.

(*a*) It is a sort of mockery and insult to seek to extol a man for qualities unbeseeming his station, although they be in other respects laudable; and also for qualities that ought not to be his most prominent ones: as if a king were praised for being a good painter, or a good architect, or even a good shot, or a good runner at the ring. Such praises confer no honour unless many of them are offered together, and after those that are appropriate to him, namely, justice and wis-

[1] See Cicero to Lucceius, *Epistulæ ad Familiares*, V, 12; Pliny to Tacitus, *Letters*, VII, 33.10.

[2] *Pieça faict perdre ces histoires.*

[3] Cf. Book II, chap. 18, *infra*, at the beginning: *César et Xenophon ont eu dequoy fonder et fermir leur narration en la grandeur de leurs gestes comme en une baze massive et solide.*

[4] See Prologue to the *Adelphi* and the *Heautontimoroumenos*.

dom in guiding his people in peace and in war.[1] In this way agriculture does honour to Cyrus, and eloquence and knowledge of letters to Charlemagne. (*c*) I have seen in my day, to put this more strongly, great persons, who derived both their titles and their station from writing, renounce their skill, debase their pens, and affect ignorance of so commonplace an acquirement, — and one which, our people hold, is seldom to be found in learned hands, — drawing attention to themselves by higher qualities.[2]

(*b*) The companions of Demosthenes in the embassy to Philip praised that prince as being handsome and eloquent and a good drinker; Demosthenes said that those praises were more appropriate for a woman, a lawyer, and a sponge, than a king.[3]

> Imperet bellante prior, jacentem
> Lenis in hostem.[4]

It is not his main affair to know how to hunt well or to dance well.

> Orabunt causas alii, cœlique meatus
> Describent radio, et fulgentia sidera dicent;
> Hic regere imperio populos sciat.[5]

(*a*) Plutarch says further that to appear so proficient in these less essential matters is to produce against oneself the proof of having ill spent one's leisure and the study which should have been employed in more necessary and useful things. So that when Philip, King of Macedonia,

[1] See Plutarch, *Life of Pericles*.

[2] *J'ay veu de mon temps, en plus fortes termes, des personnages qui tiroient d'escrire et leurs titres et leur vocation, desadvouer leur apprentissage, corrompre leur plume et affecter l'ignorance de qualité si vulgaire et que nostre peuple tient ne se rencontrer guere en mains sçavantes: se recommandans par meilleures qualitez.*

[3] See Plutarch, *Life of Demosthenes*.

[4] May he rule, superior to the warring enemy, merciful to the prostrate. — Horace, *Carmen Sæculare*, 51.

[5] Others shall plead causes, and describe with the compass the movements of the heavens, and shall name the brilliant stars; let this man learn to rule nations. — Virgil, *Æneid*, VI, 849. In the original this is part of the address of Anchises to Æneas, and the last line reads: —

> Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento.

heard the great Alexander, his son, sing at a banquet and vie with the best musicians, "Are you not ashamed," he said to him, "to sing so well?" [1] And to this same Philip a musician with whom he was disputing about his art said: "God grant, sire, that such ill luck may never happen to you that you should understand these matters better than I do!" [2] (*b*) A king should be able to reply as Iphicrates replied to an orator who importuned him in his opprobrious discourse in this wise: "Now, who are you that you so play the braggart? Are you an armoured horseman? Are you an archer? Are you a pikeman?" — "I am nothing like that," he replied, "but I am one who knows how to command all those." [3] (*a*) And Antisthenes took it for an indication of small merit in Ismenias that he was vaunted as an excellent flute-player.[4]

(*c*) I know very well that, when I hear some one dwell on the language of these Essays, I should prefer that he were silent; it does not so much lift up the words, as it abuses the sense — and the more indirect it is, the more it stings.[5] For I am mistaken, if many others give more to lay hold of in the matter itself; and, however it may be, whether well or ill, if any writer has sowed his paper with more fruitful, or at least with more plenteous seed. In order to include more, I heap together only the heads; did I add their sequel, I should multiply this volume many times. And how many anecdotes have I scattered everywhere, themselves silent, from which he who inclines to examine them a little more thoughtfully may produce countless essays! Nor do these anecdotes or my quotations always serve merely for example or authority or ornament. I do not consider them solely for the use I make of them. They often bear, beyond the scope of my subject, the seeds of an ampler and bolder theme, and give forth on another side a more exquisite note, both to me, who do not choose to express it more fully, and

[1] See Plutarch, *Life of Pericles*.

[2] See Idem, *Apothegms of Kings*, etc., and *How to tell a flatterer from a friend*.

[3] See Idem, *Apothegms of Kings*, etc.

[4] See Idem, *Life of Pericles* (Preamble).

[5] *Ce n'est pas tant eslever les mots, comme c'est deprimer le sens, d'autant plus piquamment que plus obliquement.*

to those who may fall in with my way of thinking. Recurring to the talent for words, I do not find much to choose between not knowing how to express any thing except badly, and not knowing any thing except how to express oneself well. *Non est ornamentum virile concinnitas.*[1]

(*a*) The wise men say that, with respect to knowledge, there is only philosophy, and with respect to actions, only courage,[2] which, in general, is appropriate for all degrees and all ranks. There is something of the same sort in those other two philosophers;[3] for they also promise immortality for the letters they write to their friends; but it is done in a different way, adapting itself for a good effect to the vanity of others. For they tell them that if it be the desire to make themselves known to future ages and to fame that keeps them still engaged in affairs, and leads them to shrink from the solitude and retirement to which they[4] seek to attract them, they need give themselves no further anxiety, forasmuch as they[5] have sufficient credit with posterity to assure them that, if it be only by the letters they write to them, they will make their names as well known and as illustrious as their own public acts could do. And, besides this difference, these are no empty, fleshless letters, upheld only by a fastidious choice of words brought together in heaps and arranged in smooth cadence,[6] but are stuffed full of noble precepts of wisdom, by which we are made, not more eloquent, but wiser, and which teach us, not to use language well, but to act well. A fig for the eloquence which leaves us longing for it and not for things![7] unless we may say that Cicero's, being of such supreme perfection, is in itself substance.[8] I will add here, in this connection, an anecdote that we have of him, so that we may perceive his inborn disposition.[9] He had to make a public speech, and was a

[1] Elaborate ornamentation is not manly. — Seneca, *Epistle* 95.2.
[2] *La vertu.*
[3] Seneca and Epicurus. See Seneca, *Epistle* 21.3.
[4] That is, the wise men. [5] That is, the writers.
[6] See Book II, chap. 10, *infra*, for a juster appreciation of Cicero's letters and his eloquence.
[7] See Seneca, *Epistle* 52.14.
[8] *Se donne corps elle mesme.*
[9] *Pour nous faire toucher au doigt son naturel.*

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little pressed for time to prepare himself at leisure. Eros, one of his bondmen, came to tell him that the hearing was postponed to the following day. He was so overjoyed that he gave him his freedom for this good news.[1]

(*b*) About this matter of letters I will say this, that it is a work in which my friends think that I have some facility. (*c*) And I would more readily have adopted that form for publishing my thoughts, if I had had some one to address. There would have been needful for me what once I had — a certain intercourse which would lead me on, which would uphold me and lift me up.[2] For, as for dealing with a void,[3] as others do, I should not know how, except in dreams, nor how to create unreal persons to discourse with on serious matters, being a sworn foe of every sort of falsification. I should have been more careful and more assured had I had a sturdy and friendly person to whom to address myself, than I am in looking at the diverse aspects of a whole people; and I am mistaken if it would not have given me more success. (*b*) I have naturally a free and familiar style,[4] but it is of a kind peculiar to myself, unsuitable for public employment, as in all respects is my language: too concise, irregular, abrupt, individual; and I possess no skill in formal letters, which have no other substance than that of a fine string of courteous words. I have neither faculty nor liking for those long-winded proffers of affection and service; I do not much believe in them, and I dislike to use them beyond the limits of my belief. This is a long way from the present custom, for never was there so abject and slavish a prostitution of polite formulas:[5] my life, my soul, devotion, adoration, servant, slave — all these words are in such common use that, when it is desired to make evident a more special and more reciprocal emotion,[6] there is no longer any way of expressing it. I hate mortally the air of flattery, which makes

[1] See Plutarch, *Apothegms of Kings*, etc. In 1580 the Essay ended here.

[2] Referring to La Boëtie.

[3] *Car de negotier au vent.*

[4] *Un stile comique et privé.*

[5] *Presentations.*

[6] *Faire sentir une plus expresse volonté et plus respectueuse* (= *respective*).

me naturally fall into a dry, blunt, unpolished mode of speech, which tends, to one who does not know me elsewise, somewhat toward the contemptuous. (*c*) I honour most those whom I honour least;[1] and where my soul moves with great gladness, there I forget the gait of ceremony; (*b*) and I offer myself charily and coldly to those whose servant I am, (*c*) and with least politeness to him to whom I am most devoted. (*b*) It seems to me that they ought to read in my heart, and that what my words say does injustice to my ideas. (*c*) In bidding welcome, in taking leave, in thanking, in salutation, in offering my services, and in other such verbal courtesies belonging to the ceremonial laws of our conventions, I know no one so stupidly barren of words as I am. And I have never been made use of to write letters of goodwill and recommendation, that he for whom it was done has not found it dry and cold.

(*b*) The Italians are great publishers of letters. I have, I think, a hundred different volumes of them; those of Annibale Caro[2] seem to me the best. If all the paper which, in former days, I have hastily scrawled over to ladies when my hand was truly moved by passion, were in existence, there might perchance be found there some page worthy of being transmitted to languishing youths deluded by that madness. I always write my letters post-haste, and so hurriedly that, although my scrawl is intolerably bad, I prefer to write with my own hand rather than make use of another for this; for I find none who can follow me, and I never copy them. I have accustomed the great men who know me to put up with erasures in them, and words written over others, and with paper without folds and with no margin. Those which cost me most are those of the least value; when they drag, it is a sign that I am not there. I begin generally without any plan; the first sentence gives birth to the second. The letters of the present day consist more of extraneous matter[3]

[1] *J'honore le plus ceus que j'honore le moins:* that is, I do the least honour to those for whom I feel the most honour. This sentence of the *Édition Municipale* supplants this (omitted) of 1588: *ceux que j'ayme me mettent en peine, s'il faut que je le leur die.*

[2] Translator of the *Æneid* (1507–1566).

[3] *En brodure.*

and preambles, than of substance. Just as I would rather compose two letters than close and fold one, and always hand over this business to another, so, when the subject-matter is finished, I would willingly give some one else the trouble of adding to it those long set speeches, offers of services, and prayers that we place at the end; and I wish that some new custom would relieve us of them; as also of superscribing our letters with a string of functions and titles which, for fear of tripping up in them, have many a time prevented me from writing, especially to kings' councillors and treasurers. So many new offices, such a difficult arrangement and ordering of various terms of honour, can not, being so dearly bought, be transposed or forgotten without offence. I find it likewise unseemly to burden with them the title-pages and dedications of the books we print.[1]

CHAPTER XLI

OF NOT GIVING AWAY ONE'S GLORY

The title of this Essay is not very lucid, and Florio was misled into translating it "That a man *should* not communicate his glory." What Montaigne had in mind was that a man *does* not often give freely to another the glory, the honour, which is due to himself. It may be said that there are not many men who have much "glory" to give away; and that more rarely still could they find any one to give it to. As Montaigne says: "All other things fall within the field of communication; we give our property and our lives to meet the needs of our friends; but to part with what does one honour and to bestow on another one's glory — that is seldom seen."

But that this has sometimes chanced to be done, Montaigne's stories give more or less proof. There are seven of them in two or three pages.

Number one is of a military officer throwing away his own reputation to cover the disgrace of his soldiers.

Number two, of an imperial councillor opposing his master's judgement, though it was his own also, in order that all the success of the event might be attributed to the emperor.

Number three, of the mother of a dead son declaring that his city possessed many citizens greater and more valiant than he.

[1] On the title-page of the edition of 1580, the author's name is followed by the words: "Chevalier de l'Ordre du Roy, & Gentil-homme ordinaire de sa Chambre"; and in 1582 he added the further *titre*, "Maire & Gouverneur de Bourdeaus." But these were all omitted in 1588.

Number four, of King Edward at the battle of Crécy, refusing to go to the assistance of the Black Prince.

Number five, of Lælius unselfishly promoting the greatness of Scipio.

Number six, of a king who said that things went well, not so much because he knew how to rule as because the people knew how to obey.

Number seven, of a bishop who chose to fight in battle, but not to obtain any fruit and glory from his fierce and bloody exertions, and therefore handed over all his prisoners to his friends.

One can trace the connection in Montaigne's mind of each one of these stories with his subject; but it may be observed that number six (of the popular king) is the only one that really fits; the only case in which a man *gave away* the honour he *had won*.

OF all the delusions in the world, the most fully accepted and most universal is the seeking for fame and glory, which we espouse to the point of giving up wealth, repose, life, and health, which are real and substantial goods, to follow that airy phantom and that mere voice which has neither body nor the wherewithal to clutch it.

> La fama, ch'invaghisce a un dolce suono
> Gli superbi mortali, e par si bella,
> E un echo, un sogno, anzi d'un sogno un ombra
> Ch'ad ogni vento si dilegua e sgombra.[1]

And among the unreasonable foibles of mankind, it seems that even the philosophers divest themselves more tardily and more reluctantly of this than of any other. (*b*) It is the most intractable and obstinate; (*c*) *quia etiam bene proficientes animos tentare non cessat.*[2] (*b*) There is scarcely one of which reason so clearly proves the hollowness; but its roots in us are so alive that I know not whether any man has ever been able to rid himself of them completely. After you have said every thing and believed every thing to discredit it, it exhibits, contrary to your argument, an inclination so in-

[1] Fame, who by her sweet voice charms you, O proud mortals, and seems so fair, is an echo, a dream, nay, a shadow of a dream, which every mind scatters and blows away. — Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*, XIV, 63. These verses were added in 1582, which was the year that Tasso's work appeared.

[2] Because it does not cease to tempt even those souls that are advancing well. — St. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, V, 14.

nate that you can hardly resist it.[1] (*a*) For, as Cicero says, those even who fight against it desire none the less that the books they write about it shall bear their names on the title-page, and desire to make themselves famous for having despised fame.[2] All other things fall within the field of communication; we give our property and lives to meet the need of our friends; but to part with what does one honour and to bestow on another one's glory—that is seldom seen. Catulus Luctatius, in the war against the Cymbri, having done his utmost to stop his soldiers who were flying before the foe, placed himself among the fugitives and played the coward, in order that they should seem rather to follow their captain than to fly from the enemy; thereby he sacrificed his own good name to conceal the disgrace of others.[3] When the Emperor Charles the Fifth went into Provence, in the year fifteen hundred thirty-seven [1536], it is believed that Antoine de Leve, seeing the emperor bent upon that expedition, and he himself thinking that it would add wonderfully to his renown, constantly maintained opposition to it and advised against it, to the end that all the glory and honour of this decision should be attributed to his master, and that it should be said that his good judgement and foresight had been such that, against every one's advice, he had carried through so fine an undertaking; this was doing him [4] honour at his own expense.[5] When the Thracian ambassadors consoled Archileonide, the mother of Brasidas, for the death of her son, and highly praised him, going even so far as to say that he had not left his like, she refused that private and personal praise, to give it to the public. "Do not tell me that," she said; "I know that the city of Sparta has many greater and more valiant citizens than he was." [6] In the battle of Crécy, the Prince of Wales, still very young, had command of the vanguard. The principal brunt of the

[1] *Si intestine que vous avez peu que tenir à l'encontre.*

[2] See Cicero, *Oratio pro Archia Poeta*, X.

[3] See Plutarch, *Life of Marius.*

[4] That is, the Emperor.

[5] See *Mémoires* du Bellay, VI; Brantôme, *Vies des Hommes Illustres Etrangers;* de Thou, *Histoire de France*, book I. The last two directly contradict the statements in the text.

[6] See Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians.*

conflict was at that spot. The lords who accompanied him, finding that they were in sore straits, sent to King Edward to come to their assistance. He enquired about his son's plight, and having been told that he was alive and on horseback, "I should wrong him," he said, "to go now and rob him of the honour of victory in this fight that he has sustained so long; whatever chance he may have in it, it shall be all his." And he would neither go nor send thither, knowing that, if he went, it would be said that all had been lost but for his assistance, and that to him would be attributed the success of this exploit;[1] (*c*) *semper enim quod postremum adjectum est, id rem totam videtur traxisse.*[2]

(*b*) At Rome many people thought, and it was commonly said, that the noble deeds of Scipio were due in part to Lælius, who besides was always promoting and aiding the greatness and glory of Scipio without any thought of his own.[3] And Theopompus, King of Sparta, when some one said to him that the commonwealth stood firm,[4] because he knew well how to rule, "It is rather," he said, "because the people know well how to obey."[5]

(*c*) As women who succeeded to peerages had, notwithstanding their sex, the right to be present and to declare their opinion in law-suits within the jurisdiction of peers,[6] so the ecclesiastical peers, notwithstanding their profession, were bound to assist our kings in their wars, not only by their friends and retainers, but in their own persons. Thus the Bishop of Beauvais, being present with Philip Augustus in the battle of Bouvines, participated very bravely in the desired result; but it seemed to him that he ought not to obtain any fruit and glory from his fierce and bloody exertions. He overcame many of the enemy with his own hand that day, and turned them over to the first gentleman he met, to have their throats cut or to be made prisoners, leaving to

[1] See Froissart, I. In 1580 the Essay ended here.

[2] For the last comers always seem to be those who effect the whole. — Livy, XXVII, 45.

[3] See Plutarch, *Political Precepts*.

[4] *La chose publique demeuroit sur ses pieds.*

[5] See Plutarch, *Ibid.*; and *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians*.

[6] See Jean du Tillet, *Receuil des Rois de France*, etc. (M. Villey, *Livres d'Histoire Moderne utilisés par Montaigne*, pp. 145–148.)

him the whole execution of the thing. And thus he did with William, Earl of Salisbury, delivering him to Messire Jean de Nesle. From a like refinement of conscience, he was willing to strike down, but not to wound, and therefore he fought only with a club.[1] Some one in my time, being accused by the king of having laid hands on a priest, denied it stoutly and steadily; the fact was that he had battered and trampled him with his feet.

CHAPTER XLII

OF THE INEQUALITY BETWEEN US

THE opening of this Essay — the first few pages — is characteristically vigorous and characteristically derived from Seneca; then, characteristically again, it wanders off to the King of Thrace and Alexander the Great, between whose names occurs a noble passage on royalty seen "behind the curtain."

The rest of the Essay is chiefly occupied with considerations of the disadvantages of royalty. Princely advantages are, as it were, imaginary. King Henry's great speech ("Henry V," Act IV, scene 1) is a magnificent commentary on it. And Montaigne's later Essay "De l'incommodité de la grandeur" (Book III, chapter 7) is a continuation of the theme.

PLUTARCH says somewhere that he does not find so great a distance between beast and beast as between man and man.[2] He means regarding the worth of the soul and the inner qualities.[3] In truth, I find it so far from Epaminondas, as I imagine him to have been, to some that I know, — I mean, possessing common sense, — that I would readily go further than Plutarch, and say that there is a greater distance between such and such a man than there is between such a man and such a beast;

(*c*) hem vir viro quid præstat![4]

[1] See Jean du Tillet, *Receuil des Rois de France.*

[2] See Plutarch, *That beasts make use of reason.*

[3] *Il parle de la suffisance de l'ame et qualités internes.*

[4] Ah! how one man excels another! — Terence, *Phormio*, III, 3.7.

and that there are as innumerable ranks of intelligences as there are arm's lengths between here and heaven.[1]

(*a*) But, speaking of the valuation of men, it is extraordinary that, except ourselves, nothing is valued save for its own qualities.[2] We praise a horse because he is strong and active, —

(*b*) volucrem
Sic laudamus equum, facili cui plurima palma
Fervet, et exultat rauco victoria circo,[3] —

(*a*) not for his caparison; a greyhound for his speed, not for his collar; a bird for his flight, not for his leash and bells. Why do we not likewise judge a man by what is his own? He has a great retinue, a fine palace, so much renown, so much income: all these things are roundabout him, not in him.[4] You do not buy a pig in a poke.[5] If you are bargaining for a horse, you take off his trappings and look at him bare and uncovered; [6] or, if he be covered, — as used to be the case when they were offered to princes for sale, — it is only as to the less essential parts, so that you may not waste your time over the beauty of his coat or the breadth of his croup, but give your attention principally to observing his legs and eyes and feet, which are the most useful members.

Regibus hic mos est: ubi equos mercantur, opertos
Inspiciunt, ne, si facies, ut sæpe, decora
Molli fulta pede est, emptorem inducat hiantem,
Quod pulchræ clunes, breve quod caput, ardua cervix.[7]

Why, when you judge a man, do you judge him all swathed

[1] *Et qu'il y a autant de degrez d'esprits qu'il y a d'ici au ciel de brasses, et autant innumerables.*

[2] See Seneca, *Epistle* 16.

[3] Thus we praise the swift horse, who is animated by many applauding hands, and bounds triumphantly in the resounding circus. — Juvenal, *Satires*, VIII, 57.

[4] See Seneca, *Epistle* 41.7.

[5] *Un chat en poche.*

[6] See Seneca, *Epistle* 80.

[7] The great have this custom: when they buy horses, they inspect them covered, so that if, as often happens, a fine shape is united with bad feet, the eager buyer may not be seduced by the admirable quarters, the short head, and the shapely neck. — Horace, *Satires*, I, 2.86.

and bundled up?[1] He exhibits to us only the parts which are in no wise his, and hides from us those by which alone we can judge truly of his value: it is the worth of the sword that you are seeking, not of the scabbard.[2] You would not perchance give a farthing for him had you stripped him. He must be judged by himself, not by his adornments. And, as an ancient writer very wittily says, "Do you know why you think him tall? You take in the height of his pattens."[3] The pedestal is not part of the statue. Measure him without his stilts; let him put aside his riches and honours; let him stand forth in his shirt.[4] Is his body fitted for its functions — sound and active? What sort of soul has he? Is it noble, large, and happily supplied with all its faculties? Is it rich in its own right or another's? Has chance no hand therein?[5] Whether, open-eyed, it awaits drawn swords; whether it cares how life departs — through the mouth or through the throat; whether it be a serene, equable, and contented soul — these are the things we must observe, and discern therefrom the extreme differences that exist among us.[6] Is he

sapiens, sibique imperiosus,
Quem neque pauperies, neque mors, neque vincula terrent,
Responsare cupidinibus, contemnere honores
Fortis; et in seipso totus, teres atque rotundus,
Externi ne quid valeat per læve morari,
In quem manca ruit semper fortuna?[7]

Such a man is five hundred arm's-lengths above kingdoms and duchies: he is his own empire.

[1] See Seneca, *Epistle* 80.
[2] See Idem, *Epistle* 92.
[3] See Idem, *Epistle* 76.
[4] See *Ibid.*
[5] *La fortune n'y a elle que voir?*
[6] See Seneca, *Epistle* 76.
[7] A wise man and master of himself, terrified neither by poverty, nor death, nor chains, strong in resisting passions and disdaining honours, self-contained, rounded and compact, whose polished surface nothing external can impede; with whom the assaults of fortune can seize upon nothing? — Horace, *Satires*, II, 7.83. Horace gives this as a definition; Montaigne makes it a question, by changing *sibi qui* (in the first line) to *sibique*.

(*c*) Sapiens, pol! ipse fingit fortunam sibi.[1]

(*a*) What is left for him to wish for?

> Nonne videmus
> Nil aliud sibi naturam latrare, nisi utqui
> Corpore sejunctus dolor absit, mente fruatur,
> Jucundo sensu cura semota metuque? [2]

Compare with him the rabble of mankind, stupid, mean, servile, unstable,[3] forever tossed about in the sea of the conflicting passions which drive the multitude back and forth, wholly dependent on external conditions: there is a greater distance than from heaven to earth. And yet we are so blinded by custom that we make little or no account of it; so that, if we regard a peasant and a king, (*c*) a noble and a boor, a man high in office and a private man, a rich man and a poor man, (*a*) there instantly appears to our eyes an extreme disparity; yet they are different, so to speak, only in their breeches.

(*c*) In Thrace the king was distinguished from his people in an amusing way, and one that seemed of much more value than it was.[4] He had a religion of his own, a god all to himself, whom his subjects were not entitled to worship, — it was Mercury, — and he himself disdained their gods — Mars, Bacchus, and Diana.[5] Yet these are but paintings in which there is no essential dissimilarity. (*a*) For, like actors, you see them on the stage, assuming the mien of duke and emperor; but, immediately after, lo, they are but wretched varlets and porters, which is their genuine and original condition.[6] So with the emperor, whose magnificence in public dazzles you, —

[1] The wise man, by Pollux! himself forges his fortune. — Plautus, *Trinummus*, II, 2.84.

[2] Do we not see that nature claims for herself no more than that pain hold aloof from the body, and that she enjoy in her mind a feeling of pleasure without care or fear? — Lucretius, II, 16.

[3] In the early editions, including 1588, this catalogue of qualities reads: *ignorante, stupide et endormie, basse, servile, pleine de fiebvre et de frayeur, instable.*

[4] *D'une plaisante maniere, et bien rencherie.*

[5] See Herodotus, V, 7.

[6] See Seneca, *Epistles* 76 and 80.

(*b*) Scilicet et grandes viridi cum luce smaragdi
Auro includuntur, teriturque thalassina vestis
Assidue, et Veneris sudorem exercita potat,[1] —

(*a*) see him behind the curtain and he is but an ordinary man, and, it may be, more worthless than the meanest of his subjects. (*c*) *Ille beatus introrsum est. Istius bracteata felicitas est.*[2] (*a*) Cowardice, irresolution, ambition, anger, and envy agitate him like other men, —

Non enim gazæ neque consularis
Summovet lictor miseros tumultus
Mentis et curas laqueata circum
Tecta volantes,[3] —

(*b*) and anxiety and fear hold him by the throat in the midst of his armies;

Re veraque metus hominum, curæque sequaces,
Nec metuunt sonitus armorum nec fera tela;
Audacterque inter reges rerumque potentes
Versantur, neque fulgorem reverentur ab auro.[4]

(*a*) Do fever and headache and gout spare him any more than us? When old age falls upon his shoulders, will the archers of his guard disburden him of it? When terror of death appalls him, will he be reassured by the presence of his gentlemen of the chamber? When he is full of distrust and idle thoughts, will our salutations [5] bring him to himself? That canopy over his bed, all stiff with gold and pearls, has no virtue to ease the gripes of a sharp attack of colic.[6]

[1] Wearing great emeralds whose translucent green is set in gold, and garments of the color of the sea, which are defiled by the sweat of his debauches. — Lucretius, IV, 1126.

[2] The one contains his own happiness; the other wears it like gilt. — Seneca, *Epistles* 119 and 115.

[3] For neither treasures nor the consul's lictor can drive away the tumultuous troubles of the soul and the cares that flit beneath panelled ceilings. — Horace, *Odes*, II, 16.9.

[4] In truth, the fears and cares that haunt men are not afraid of the sound of arms or of savage darts; they frequent kings and potentates, unabashed by the gleam of gold. — Lucretius, II, 48.

[5] *Bonnettades*.

[6] Cf. Seneca, *Epistle* 17.

Nec calidæ citius decedunt corpore febres,
Textilibus si in picturis ostroque rubenti
Jacteris, quam si in plebeia veste cubandum est.[1]

The flatterers of the great Alexander declared to him that he was the son of Jupiter. One day, being wounded, he said, as he looked at the blood flowing from his wound, "Well, what do you say about this? is not this blood red and purely human? It is not of the quality that Homer describes as flowing from the wounds of the gods." [2] Hermodorus the poet had written verses in honour of Antigonus, in which he called him the son of the Sun; but he retorted: "He who empties my close stool knows very well that that's not so." [3] He is nothing, when all comes to all, but a man;[4] and if he is base by nature, the sovereignty of the universe would not better him.

(*b*) Puellæ
Hunc rapiant; quicquid calcaverit hic rosa fiat.[5]

What avails, if his be a coarse and stupid soul? Even pleasure and good fortune are never seen without strength and intelligence.

Hæc perinde sunt, ut illius animus qui ea possidet,
Qui uti scit, ei bona; illi qui non utitur recte, mala.[6]

(*a*) We must have a sense that can relish the benefits of fortune, whatever they may be; it is the enjoying, not the possessing, that makes us happy.

Non domus et fundus, non æris acervus et auri
Ægroto domini deduxit corpore febres,

[1] Nor does feverish heat leave your body the sooner if you toss about on brocades and purple, than if you must lie on a poor man's bed. — Lucretius, II, 34.

[2] See Plutarch, *Apothegms of Kings*, etc., and *Life of Alexander*.

[3] See Idem, *Apothegms of Kings*, etc., where the poet is called Hermodotus.

[4] *C'est un homme pour tous potages.*

[5] May the girls seize upon him; on the ground he treads upon, may roses spring. — Persius, *Satires*, II, 38.

[6] These things depend for their value on their possessor; for him who knows how to use them well, they are good; for him who uses them ill, they are bad. — Terence, *Heautontimoroumenos*, I, 3.21.

Non animo curas; valeat possessor oportet,
Qui comportatis rebus bene cogitat uti.
Qui cupit aut metuit, juvat illum sic domus aut res,
Ut lippum pictæ tabulæ, fomenta podagram.[1]

If he be a fool, his perception is sluggish and deadened; he enjoys nothing, any more than one with a cold in his head does the savour of Greek wine, or than a horse does the costliness of the trappings with which he is bedecked. (*c*) It is as Plato says, that health, beauty, strength, wealth, and every thing that is called good, are to the unjust no less evil than good to the just, and what is evil, contrariwise.[2]

(*a*) Furthermore, when body and soul are in poor condition, of what use are these external advantages, inasmuch as the slightest prick of a pin and spiritual perturbation [3] suffices to take from us the pleasure of being monarch of the world? At the first twinge that gout gives him, (*b*) to no purpose is he "Sire" and "Your Majesty," —

Totus et argento conflatus, totus et auro,[4] —

(*a*) does he not lose all remembrance of his palaces and his grandeurs? If he is angry, does his high estate save him from flushing, from turning pale, from gnashing his teeth like a madman? And if he is a man of ability and of natural worth, royalty adds little to his happiness,—

Si ventri bene, si lateri est pedibusque tuis, nil
Divitiæ poterunt regales addere majus,[5] —

[1] Not a mansion and an estate, nor a store of silver and gold can drive fever from the sick body of their possessor, or cares from his mind. He must be in good health if he hopes to enjoy his heaped-up riches. Mansions and treasures give as little delight to the man who is full of desires and fears as paintings to the blear-eyed or fomentations to the gouty. — Horace, *Epistles*, I, 2.47.

[2] See Plato, *Laws*, book II. This passage of the *Laws* is translated thus by Dr. Jowett: "I plainly declare that evils as they are termed are goods to the unjust, and only evils to the just; and that goods are truly good to the good, but evil to the evil."

[3] *Passion de l'ame.*

[4] All decked with silver, all decked with gold. — Tibullus, I, 2.70. Montaigne substitutes *conflatus* for *contextus* of the original.

[5] If your stomach and lungs and legs are sound, the wealth of kings can give you no greater thing. — Horace, *Epistles*, I, 12.5.

he sees that it is all illusion and deception; yes, perhaps he will be of the opinion of King Seleucus, that "he who knows the weight of a sceptre would not stoop to pick it up if he found it lying on the ground." [1] He said it thinking of the heavy and painful duties which are incumbent on a good king. Surely it is no small matter to have to govern others, when so many difficulties present themselves in governing ourselves. In this matter of commanding, which seems so delightsome, I am strongly of the opinion, — in view of the frailty of man's judgement and the difficulty of choice among novel and doubtful things, — that it is much easier and pleasanter to follow than to lead, and that it is great peace for the mind to have simply to pursue a beaten track and to be responsible for oneself alone.

(*b*) Ut satius multo jam sit parere quietum,
Quam regere imperio res velle.[2]

Moreover, Cyrus said that it belonged to no man to command who was not worth more than those whom he commanded.[3] (*a*) But King Hiero, in Xenophon, says further that even with regard to the enjoyment of pleasures, kings are worse off than private persons, because easiness and facility take from pleasures the bitter-sweet relish that we find therein.[4]

(*b*) Pinguis amor nimiumque potens in tædia nobis
Vertitur, et stomacho dulcis ut esca nocet.[5]

(*a*) Do we suppose that choir-boys greatly enjoy music? Rather, surfeit makes it distasteful to them. Festivals, dances, masquerades, joustings delight those who do not see them often, and who have desired to see them; but to him whose ordinary fare they are, their taste becomes insipid and unpleasant; nor do women charm him who with a cloyed

[1] See Plutarch, *Whether aged men should meddle in public affairs.*

[2] Far better it is, quietly to obey, than to wish to rule with supreme power. — Lucretius, V, 1129.

[3] See Amyot's *Epistre au Roy* at the head of his translation of Plutarch's *Morals*.

[4] See Xenophon, *Hiero*.

[5] An over-abundant and over-mastering love becomes cloying and harmful to us, as sweet food to the stomach. — Ovid, *Amores*, II, 19.25.

heart possesses them. He who does not permit himself to be thirsty can not take pleasure in drinking.[1] The farces of strolling actors amuse us; but to the performers themselves they are a hard day's work. And that this is so, witness that it is the pastime of princes, it is their holiday, to be able sometimes to disguise themselves and descend to the low, plebeian manner of living.

> Plerumque gratæ principibus vices,
> Mundæque parvo sub lare pauperum
> Cænæ, sine aulæis et ostro,
> Sollicitam explicuere frontem.[2]

(*c*) There is nothing so burdensome, so hard to please as abundance. What appetite would not be repelled by the sight of three hundred women at his discretion, as the Grand Turk has in his seraglio?[3] And what an appetite and countenance for sport did that one of his ancestors provide for himself, who never went hawking without seven thousand falconers?[4] (*a*) And, besides that, I believe that this effulgence of grandeur brings no slight impediments to the enjoyment of the sweeter pleasures; they[5] are too brightly lighted and too much in view. (*b*) And I know not why it is that we require them the more to conceal and cover up their fault. For what in us is unguarded conduct, in them the people considers to be tyranny, and contempt and scorn for the laws; and over and above the inclination to vice, they seem to add to it also the pleasure of insulting and trampling under foot public laws. (*c*) Indeed, Plato, in his *Gorgias*, defines a tyrant as one who has the power in a city[6] to do whatever he pleases. (*b*) And often, for this reason, the display and publicity of their vice hurts more than the vice itself. Every one dreads being spied upon and criticised; they are so, even to their looks and thoughts, all the people con-

[1] See Xenophon, *Hiero*.

[2] Often a change is agreeable to the great, and a single repast under the humble roof of a poor man, without a high table and purple hangings, has smoothed the careworn brow. — Horace, *Odes*, III, 29.13.

[3] See G. Postel, *Histoire des Turcs*.

[4] See Chalcondylas, *Histoire de la Décadence de l'Empire Grec*, etc.

[5] Princes.

[6] *In civitate* (Ficino's Latin translation).

sidering that it is their right and for their interest to judge of them; besides which, blemishes are more obvious, in the degree in which the place they occupy is more in view and more brightly lighted,[1] and a mole and a wart on the face are more apparent than a scar is elsewhere.[2] (*a*) This is why the poets represent the amours of Jupiter as carried on under other forms than his own; and of all the many amorous exploits which they attribute to him, there is but one, I think, in which he appears in his grandeur and majesty.

But let us return to Hiero: he tells, too, how many incommodities he feels in his kingship, not being able to go about freely and travel, being, as it were, a prisoner within the boundaries of his kingdom; and that in all his acts he finds himself surrounded by an annoying crowd.[3] In truth, seeing our own [4] seated by themselves at table, beset by so many chattering and staring strangers, I have often felt more pity than envy of them. (*b*) King Alphonso said that, in this respect, asses were better off than kings: their masters allow them to feed at their ease, whereas kings can not obtain that from their attendants. (*a*) And it has never appeared to me that it was any great convenience in the life of a man of intelligence to have a score of onlookers about his close stool, or that the services of a man who has ten thousand livres a year, or who has taken Casal,[5] or defended Siena,[6] are more convenient and acceptable to him than those of a good and experienced body-servant.

(*b*) Princely advantages are, as it were, imaginary: every degree of fortune has some image of principality. Cæsar calls all the lords who administered justice in France in his day petty kings.[7] In truth, except for the title of Sire, we

[1] *Outre ce que les taches s'agrandissent selon l'eminence et clarté du lieu où elles sont assises.*

[2] See Plutarch, *Political Precepts*.

[3] See Xenophon, *Hiero*.

[4] That is, our own princes.

[5] The maréchal de Brissac, in 1534.

[6] The maréchal de Montluc, in 1550.

[7] *Roytelets*. As Cæsar says nothing like this of the Gauls, Coste, followed by later commentators, suggested that Montaigne, by a lapse of memory, refers here to what Cæsar says of the *Germans*, in *De Bello Gallico*, VI, 23.

are not far behind our kings. Observe, in the provinces remote from court, — say, Brittany, for example, — the retinue, the vassals, the officers, the occupations, the service and ceremonial of a retired and home-keeping nobleman brought up among his servants; and observe too the flight of his imagination — nothing is more royal; he hears talk of his master once a year, as he does of the King of Persia, and recognises him only by some old kinship which his secretary keeps on record. Truly our laws are liberal enough, and the burden of sovereignty is felt by a French gentleman scarcely twice in his life. Real and effectual subjection concerns only those among us who assent to it, and who like to obtain honours and riches by such service; for he who chooses to keep close to his own hearth-stone, and knows how to manage his house without quarrels and without law-suits, he is as free as the Duke of Venice. (*c*) *Paucos servitus, plures servitutem tenent.*[1]

(*a*) But, above all, Hiero lays stress on the point that he finds himself deprived of all friendship and companionship, wherein consists the most perfect and sweetest fruit of human life. For what testimony of affection and good-will can I derive from him who, will he or nill he, owes to me all that he can do? Can I make account of his humble speech and courteous homage, seeing that it is not in his power to refuse them to me? The honour that we receive from those who fear us is not honour; this homage is paid to my sovereignty, not to me.

(*b*) Maximum hoc regni bonum est,
Quod facta domini cogitur populus sui
Quam ferre tam laudare.[2]

(*a*) Do I not see that the bad king and the good, he who is hated and he who is beloved, the one has as much honour as the other? The same manifestations, the same ceremonies were observed for my predecessor and will be for my successor. If my subjects do not harm me, that is not a proof

[1] Few are enslaved; many enslave themselves. — Seneca, *Epistle* 22.11.

[2] The chief advantage of royalty is this, that the subjects are compelled, not only to endure, but to praise the deeds of their ruler. — Seneca, *Thyestes*, II, 1.30.

of any great affection; why should I take it as such, since they could not if they would. No one becomes my companion for the friendship that may exist between him and me, for it would not be possible to knit friendship where there is so little connection and correspondence. My eminence has set me apart from intercourse with men; there is too great disparity and disproportion. They accompany me as a matter of form, and from habit; (*c*) or rather my fortune than me, thereby to add to their own. (*a*) All that they say to me and do is mere outer show, their freedom being held under on all sides by the great power I have over them. I see about me nothing that is not covered over and disguised. His courtiers praised the Emperor Julian one day for his just judgements. "I should readily take pride in these praises," he said, "if they came from persons who would dare to accuse or blame my acts when they were the opposite." [1]

(*b*) All the real advantages that princes have are common to them and men of moderate fortune; it is for the gods to ride winged horses and feed on ambrosia. They have no different sleep and no different appetites from ours; their steel is of no better temper than that with which we arm ourselves; their crown shelters them from neither the sun nor the rain. Diocletian, who wore one so revered and so prosperous, resigned it, to withdraw to the enjoyment of private life; and some time after, the exigencies of public affairs requiring that he should return to take charge of them, he answered them who besought him to do so: "You would not undertake to persuade me to this, if you had seen the beautiful rows of trees that I have planted with my own hands on my estate, and the fine melons I have sown there." [2] In the opinion of Anacharsis, the most fortunate form of government would be one in which, all other things being equal, precedence should be meted out to virtue, and the leavings [3]

[1] See Ammianus Marcellinus, XXII, 10. It was the lawyers, not the courtiers, who praised him.

[2] See Aurelius Victor, *Augustan History*. But M. Villey thinks it likely that Montaigne took this illustration from Crinitus, *Commentariorum de honesta disciplina*, XIII, 8.

[3] *Le rebut*. See Plutarch, *Banquet of the Seven Wise Men*.

to vice. (*a*) When King Pyrrhus undertook to go into Italy, Cyneas, his wise counsellor, wishing to make him perceive the emptiness of his ambition, "Well, Sire," he asked him, "for what end are you preparing this great enterprise?" — "To make myself master of Italy," he quickly replied. —"And then," continued Cyneas, "when that is done?"— "I shall pass on," said the other, "into Gaul and into Spain." — "And then?" — "Then I shall go on to conquer Africa; and at last, when I have made the whole world subject to me, I will rest, and live in content and at my ease." — "For God's sake, Sire," Cyneas thereupon retorted, "tell me what prevents you from being now, if you choose, in that condition? Why do you not from this hour take up your quarters where you say that you aspire to be, and spare yourself all the effort and risks that you interpose?" [1]

> Nimirum quia non bene norat quæ esset habendi
> Finis, et omnino quoad crescat vera voluptas.[2]

I will conclude [3] with an old verse, which I consider singularly appropriate to this subject: *Mores cuique sui fingunt fortunam.*[4]

CHAPTER XLIII

OF SUMPTUARY LAWS

MONTAIGNE judges the sumptuary laws of his day to be unwise; not that he would not have different degrees of rank distinguished, — "which in truth I consider to be most essential in a state," — but that there are better ways "to regulate the foolish and idle expenses of the table and of apparel." He seems to think that the spring of reformation is in the "inclination" of the king; and he gives a curious list of the follies that would immediately disappear if the court would frown on them.

The Essay ends with an inconsequent but interesting passage added in 1595, when he was full of Plato and considerations about *laws*.

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[1] See Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus*.

[2] Surely it was because he did not well know what should be the limit of getting, or, in general, what increases true pleasure. — Lucretius, V, 1432. Lucretius is not speaking of Pyrrhus.

[3] *Je m'en vais clorre ce pas:* a military expression.

[4] A man's character fashions his fortune. — Cornelius Nepos, *Life of Atticus*, II. Erasmus comments at length on this sentence in his *Adages*, II, 4.30.

The sentence beginning: "In all things, save only those that are evil, change is to be dreaded," is a literal translation from Plato (*Laws*) and the next is immediately derived from him. Compare Lord Bacon ("Of Innovations"): "New things piece not so well; but though they help by their utility, yet they trouble by their inconformity; besides, they are like strangers, more admired and less favoured."

M. Villey remarks: "To understand the opportuneness of this Essay, we must remember that in the sixteenth century, under the influence of Italy, luxury developed with extreme rapidity, fashions were transformed with exceptional promptitude, and incessantly kings intervened by laws and edicts to prevent the deplorable consequences of these excesses. It was thought of great importance to distinguish ranks by costumes and not to permit the common people to dress like the great. Fortunes were often lost in this fearful racing toward luxury, where each one strove to go beyond his neighbour. Public finances equally suffered; for, certainly at the beginning of the century, and in great part through the whole of it, silks and objects of personal adornment came from Italy, and thus every year important sums were drained out of the country. At last it was evident that this question interested the morality of the nation."

The first sumptuary law was enacted in 1518; followed by others in 1532, 1543, 1549, 1561, 1573, 1577, 1583.

THE way in which our laws attempt to regulate the foolish and idle expenses of the table and of apparel seems to run counter to their object. The true method would be to engender in men a contempt for gold and silk as being idle and useless things; and we enhance their honour and their value, which is a very foolish way to disgust men with them; for to say that it is only princes who (*c*) eat turbot and who (*a*) may wear velvet and gold lace,[1] and to forbid common people to do so — what is that but making such things to be valued, and increasing every one's desire to use them? Let kings boldly lay aside these marks of grandeur; they have enough others; (*b*) such extravagances are more pardonable in any other man than in a prince. (*a*) By the example of several nations we can learn many better ways of externally distinguishing ourselves and our ranks (which, in truth, I consider to be most essential in a state), without fostering, to that end, this so manifest corruption and unfitness. It is astonishing how easily and how quickly custom establishes the footing

[1] *La tresse d'or.*

of her authority in these indifferent matters. It is certain that barely a year had we worn broadcloth at court, in mourning for King Henry the Second, when already, in every one's opinion, silks had fallen into such contempt [1] that, if you saw a person dressed in them, you at once set him down as a citizen.[2] They remained the portion of physicians and surgeons; and although every one was dressed almost alike, still there were elsewise enough manifest differences in the degrees of men. (*b*) How suddenly in our armies did the dirty doublets of chamois skin and linen come into honour, and well-cared-for and costly garments into blame and contempt!

(*a*) Let kings begin to do without these expenditures — the end will be gained in a month, without edict or decree: we shall all follow after. The law should declare, on the contrary, that crimson and goldsmith's work are forbidden to all conditions of men save mountebanks and courtesans. By such a device Zeleucus reformed the corrupt customs of the Locrians. His decrees were to this effect: that a free woman may not have more than one maidservant follow her, except when she is intoxicated; nor can she go out of the city at night, or wear gold ornaments about her person, or a richly embroidered garment, unless she be a common whore; that, except pandars, no man is permitted to wear a gold ring on his finger, or a garment of fine stuff, like those of the cloths woven in the city of Miletus. And thus, by these shameful exceptions, he skilfully turned his citizens away from harmful superfluities and luxuries.[3] (*b*) It was a very effective means of leading men to obedience by the way of honour and ambition.

Our kings are all-powerful in such external reforms; their inclination acts in these matters as law. (*c*) *Quidquid principes faciunt, præcipere videntur.*[4] (*b*) The rest of France takes for its fashion the fashion of the court. Would that

[1] *Vilité.*

[2] *Homme de ville = bourgeois;* in 1580, *homme de nêant;* in 1588, *homme de peu.*

[3] See Diodorus Siculus, XII, 20. The Essay ended here in 1580.

[4] Whatever princes do is regarded as prescribed by them. — Quintilian, *Declamations*, III.

offence might be taken at those disgusting breeches which display so openly our private parts; at that thick padding-out of doublets, which makes us quite other than we are, so inconvenient in putting on armour; at those long effeminate tresses; at that fashion of kissing what we give to our friends, and our hands in saluting them — an act of homage formerly due to princes alone; and that a gentleman should appear in a place of ceremony without his sword at his side, all unbuttoned and untrussed, as if he were just from the house of office;[1] and that, contrary to the usage of our fathers and to the peculiar freedom of the nobility of this kingdom, wherever they[2] may be, we keep our heads uncovered even at a great distance from them; and, as with them, with a hundred others likewise, we have so many petty kings;[3] and also at other new and erroneous[4] innovations, which will find themselves incontinently banished and decried. These are superficial errors, but none the less of evil omen; and we are warned that the structure is giving way when we see the plastering and coating of our walls begin to crack open.

(*c*) Plato, in his Laws, considers no calamity in the world more harmful to his city than to let the youth have liberty to change from one form to another in their apparel, their behaviour, their dances, their exercises, and their songs, shifting their opinions, now in this disposition of the mind, now in that; running after novelties, honouring their inventors; whereby morals are corrupted and all old forms of education are brought into scorn and contempt. In all things, save only those that are evil, change is to be dreaded — the change of seasons, of winds, of diet, of moods. And no laws have their due honour save those to which God has given such long continuance that no one knows their origin, nor that they have ever been different.[5]

[1] *Garderobbe.*
[2] That is, princes.
[3] *Tercelets et quartelets de roys.*
[4] *Vitieuses.*
[5] See Plato, *Laws*, book VII.

CHAPTER XLIV

OF SLEEP

MONTAIGNE had been struck by the accounts in Plutarch's Lives of the profound sleep of some great men at the moment of their most important affairs; and evidently wondering at these stories, he simply brought them together here, with little comment.

Montaigne apparently had not happened to read Dr. Johnson's note on Miranda's sleep (in "The Tempest"). He says: "I believe experience will prove that any violent agitation of the mind easily subsides in slumber."[1] Nor had he had the pleasure of reading Voltaire, or he would certainly have added to his other stories what Voltaire tells concerning "le grand Condé." The duc d'Enghien (as he then was), following the example of Alexander, slept never more peacefully than on the night before the battle of Rocroy, and had to be waked at the necessary moment. The fact was celebrated by Bossuet.

It has been noted that the modern hero was even more remarkable than the ancient, since Alexander — a trained warrior — was to meet an already twice-conquered enemy, while Condé, who had just been put at the head of the army, was going to his first battle with a formidable foe.

REASON bids us, indeed, to travel always the same road, but not always at the same speed;[2] and, while the wise man should not allow human passions to cause him to wander from the straight path, he can, without prejudice to his duty, leave it to them to hasten or slacken his pace, and not plant himself like an immovable and impassive Colossus. Were Virtue herself incarnate, I believe that her pulse would beat faster going to an assault than going to dinner; truly it is needful that she be heated and aroused.

For this reason, I have remarked as an unusual thing the having sometimes seen great personages, in the midst of the

[1] Cf. Sir Kenelm Digby (*Private Memoirs*): "It was some time before sleep could take possession of her fair lids, but, at length, it being the nature of extreme grief to oppress the spirits, whereas a tolerable one doth but exasperate them, her heart yielded to the weight of so heavy a burden; and Death himself, grown tender in seeing her affliction, sent his brother Sleep to charm her wearied eyes."

[2] See Seneca, *Epistle* 20.3.

highest undertakings and most important affairs, remain so wholly themselves as not even to curtail their sleep. Alexander the Great, on the day appointed for that fierce battle against Darius, slept so soundly and so far into the morning that Parmenion was obliged to enter his chamber and, going to his bedside, to call him by his name twice or thrice, to wake him, the hour for going out to fight compelling him to do so.[1] The Emperor Otho being resolved to kill himself, that very night, having put his private affairs in order, divided his money among his servants, and sharpened the edge of a sword with which he proposed to make way with himself, waiting only to know whether every one of his friends had retired in safety, he fell into so profound a slumber that his attendants heard him snore.[2] The death of this emperor has many points of resemblance to that of the great Cato, and even in this respect: for Cato, being prepared to kill himself, while he was waiting for information to be brought him whether the senators whom he had sent away had put out from the harbour of Utica, fell so sound asleep that those in the next room heard him breathing; and he whom he had sent to the harbour having waked him to say that a gale prevented the senators from making sail at their leisure, he despatched thither still another, and, sinking back into bed, slumbered again until his last messenger assured him of their departure.[3] We can compare him with the case of Alexander also, in the great and dangerous storm that threatened him, at the time of the conspiracy of Catiline, from the sedition of the tribune Metellus, who desired to publish a decree for the recall to the city of Pompey with his army; against which decree Cato alone protested; and he and Metellus had had harsh words about it, and violent threats, in the Senate. But it was the next day, in the public place, that it was necessary to come to its carrying out; where Metellus, besides the favour of the people and of Cæsar (then conspiring for the benefit of Pompey), would be accompanied by many foreign slaves and peculiarly devoted

[1] See Plutarch, *Life of Alexander.*
[2] See Idem, *Life of Otho.*
[3] See Idem, *Life of Cato of Utica.*

gladiators,[1] while Cato was strong only in his own firmness; so that his kinsmen and household and many worthy people were in great anxiety about him, and there were some of them who passed the night together, unwilling to lie down or eat or drink, because of the danger they saw to be prepared for him. Likewise, his wife and his sisters did nothing but weep and greatly grieve in his house, where he, on the contrary, encouraged them all, and after having supped as usual, went to bed and slept a deep sleep until morning, when one of his colleagues in the tribuneship came to wake him to go forth to the affray.[2] The knowledge that we have, from the rest of his life, of this man's high courage,[3] enables us to conclude with full certainty that this condition arose from his soul being lifted so far above such circumstances that he would not vouchsafe to be moved by them more than by everyday circumstances. In the naval battle that Augustus won against Sextus Pompey in Sicily, as he was on the point of beginning the fight, he was overcome with such deep sleep that his friends were obliged to wake him to give the signal for the battle. This afterwards furnished M. Antonius with a pretext for the accusation that he had not had the courage even to look with open eyes at the disposition of his army, and had not dared to present himself to the soldiers until Agrippa came and announced to him the news of the victory he had won over his enemies.[4] But as for young Marius, who did even worse (for the day of his last fight against Sylla, after he had disposed his army and given the word and signal for battle, he lay down under a tree in the shade, to rest, and fell into so dead a sleep that he hardly could be awakened by the rout and flight of his men, having seen nothing of the conflict), they say that it was because he was so extremely exhausted by labour and by lack of sleep that Nature had done her utmost.[5]

[1] *Escrimeurs à outrance = escrimeurs qui sont engagés à donner la vie pour leurs maîtres.*

[2] See Plutarch, *Life of Cato of Utica.*

[3] In the early editions, 1580–1588, this sentence was made to apply to Alexander and Otho, as well as to Cato: *de la grandeur de courage de ces trois hommes.*

[4] See Suetonius, *Life of Augustus.*

[5] See Plutarch, *Life of Sylla.*

And in this connection let physicians decide whether sleep is so essential that our lives depend on it; for we read that they killed King Perseus of Macedonia, when prisoner at Rome, by depriving him of sleep;[1] but Pliny cites persons who have lived a long time without sleep.[2] (*c*) In Herodotus, we read of nations in which the men sleep and stay awake by half-years.[3] And they who write the life of Epimenides the sage say that he slept fifty-seven years without waking.[4]

CHAPTER XLV

OF THE BATTLE OF DREUX

THIS was the first battle of the civil wars. It was fought December 19, 1562, in the reign of Charles IX. The Reformers for a time believed themselves to have won the day: but the duc de Guise renewed the combat by bringing up troops from the rear, and after a bloody struggle the Protestant army was driven from the field. The prince de Condé was made prisoner and 8000 men lost their lives.

Montaigne here defends the duc de Guise against the accusation of having seen the constable de Montmorency and his troops in danger, and not having gone to their assistance. In his defence he cites ancient examples which he thinks *germein* to the case of monsieur de Guise.

The last paragraph was not in the first edition; it was added in 1588.

OUR battle of Dreux was all full of unusual incidents; but those who do not greatly favour the renown of monsieur de Guise readily declare that he can not be excused for having halted and delayed with the forces under his command, while monsieur le connétable,[5] the head of the army, was being driven back, with the artillery; and that he would have done better to take the risk of attacking the enemy's flank, rather than, by awaiting the advantage of bringing up the rearguard,[6] to suffer so serious a loss. But besides the proof afforded by the result in this case, whoever will argue the matter dis-

[1] See Plutarch, *Life of Paulus Æmilius*.

[2] See Pliny, *Natural History*, VII, 51.

[3] Herodotus (IV, 25) says that he does not believe what Montaigne states as a fact alleged by him.

[4] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Epimenides*.

[5] De Montmorency.

[6] *Attendant l'avantage de le voir en queue.*

passionately will, I believe, readily admit that the end and aim, not only of a commander but of every soldier, should be to consider victory as a whole; and that no special occurrences, whatever their importance may be, should divert him from that point.

Philopœmen, in an encounter with Machanidas, sent in advance a large troop of archers and slingers to begin the skirmish; and the enemy, after routing them, wasted their time in hotly pursuing them, passing, after their victory, by the squadron where Philopœmen was; he, although his men were excited by this, thought it best not to budge from his place, or confront the enemy, to succour his troops. Instead, having let them be pursued and cut to pieces in his sight, he began his attack on his foes by charging their infantry battalion when he saw them to be wholly deserted by their cavalry; and although they were Lacedæmonians, because he fell upon them at the moment when, thinking that the victory was won, they were beginning to fall into disarray, he easily compassed his end, and, that done, pursued Machanidas.[1] This case is germane to that of monsieur de Guise.

(*b*) In that fierce battle of Agesilaus against the Bœotians which Xenophon, who was present, calls the most sanguinary that he ever saw, Agesilaus rejected the advantage that fortune offered him of allowing the battalion of the Bœotians to pass and setting upon them in the rear, however certain a victory he foresaw therefrom, thinking that it showed more skill than valour; and, to display his prowess, he chose rather, with a marvellous ardour of courage, to attack them in front. But so he was well beaten, and wounded, and obliged after all to extricate himself and adopt the course he had rejected at the outset — making his soldiers open their ranks to give passage to the torrent of Bœotians; then, when they had passed, observing that they were marching in disorder, like men who believed themselves out of all danger, he had them pursued and attacked in flank; but for all that, he could not turn their flight into a rout, for they retreated slowly, always showing their teeth, until they had reached safety.[2]

[1] See Plutarch, *Life of Philopœmen*.

[2] See Idem, *Life of Agesilaus*. It was the battle of Coroneia, 394 B.C.

CHAPTER XLVI

OF NAMES

As Montaigne himself says, it is *une galimafrée* that he sets before us here; but his art makes a mere salad as nutritious as it is palatable.

His first "article" is that some names are in ill-repute, and that others, in royal houses, seem in especial favour; and in this connection he gives an illustration of the extraordinary number of *Guillaumes*, among gentlemen, at the end of the twelfth century. Then he remarks that it is well, not only to have "bon nom," that is, "crédit et réputation," but also "un nom beau"—a name that can easily be pronounced and remembered. "Socrates thinks it a matter worthy a father's attention to give well-sounding names to his children." Next he tells a story about the naming of a chapel at Poitiers; and to this he adds (in 1595) a not very relevant story about the effect of music on the passions. Then comes an interesting passage of ironical comment on the follies in the matter of names of the "Reformed Church" in his own day, follies the like of which, in England, Scott has made familiar to us. Then he praises Jacques Amyot for not having *translated* the Latin names, as the Latin writers of that day did the French names.

He goes on to speak with much good sense of the *vilain usage* of calling each one by the name of his estate and lordship; but he gives no indication of being aware that his own forbears had placed his own family in just the situation he deplores. *La maison noble de Montaigne* was bought in 1477 by Ramon Eyquem, the great-grandfather of Michel Montaigne; and the title *de Montaigne* was first assumed by Michel's father; while Michel himself was the first to drop the name of Eyquem. (It has been a troublesome business to disentangle the family of Montaigne from the previous family who owned the château.) The considerations to which he is here led "draw me perforce," he says, "into another field"; and he bursts into an eloquent outcry at our folly in thinking that we can attach to ourselves the bubble reputation, which we go seeking even in the cannon's mouth. Eloquent it is, and poetical, but illogical enough, since it can make not the slightest difference to us whether we pass to posterity by one or another name, so long as we are rightly known by our own deeds.

But his thought, illogical or not, goes at last to the deepest of questions, and he asks (in 1595) what perception have the dead of the fame that lives after them, of the glory that keeps their memory green. "Dieu le sçait." For him, it was not true that

> major famæ sites est, quam Virtutis; —

but fame has, none the less, proclaimed his name.

WHATEVER diversity of herbs there may be, the name salad covers them all. In like manner, in considering names, I am going to make here a gallimaufry of diverse articles.

Every nation has some names which, I know not why, are in ill-repute; and with us, Jehan, Guillaume, Benoît. Item, there seem to be, in the genealogy of princes, certain names that are inevitably assigned to them: as the Ptolemys in Egypt, the Henrys in England, the Charleses in France, the Baudoins [Baldwins] in Flanders, and in our old Aquitaine the Guillaumes, whence, they say, the name of Guienne is derived [1] — a stupid surmise,[2] were there not some quite as crude in Plato himself. Item, it is a trivial thing, but worth mention for its oddity, and written of by an eye-witness, that when Henry, Duke of Normandy, son of Henry the Second, King of England, gave a great banquet in France, the assemblage of the nobility was so great that, having for pastime assorted themselves in companies by similarity of names, there were in the first group, which was Guillaumes, a hundred and ten knights of that name seated at table, besides the simple gentlemen and retainers.[3] (*b*) It is as diverting to arrange the tables according to the names of the guests as it was to the Emperor Geta to arrange the service of his courses according to the first letters of the names of the viands: those were served together which began with M: mouton, marcassin,[4] merlus,[5] and marsouin,[6] and so with the others.[7]

(*a*) Item, it is said that it is a good thing to have a good name, that is to say, honour and reputation; but beyond that, in truth it is an advantage to have a name that can easily be pronounced and remembered; for so kings and great folk recognise us more easily and forget us less readily; and even of our servants, we more commonly employ and give our orders to those whose names come most readily to

[1] See Jean Bouchet, *Annales d'Aquitaine*.
[2] *Par un froid rencontre*.
[3] See Bouchet, *ubi supra*.
[4] Brawn.
[5] Salt cod.
[6] Porpoise.
[7] See Ælius Spartianus (*Augustan History*, V), whose words are repeated almost literally by Crinitus, *De Honesta Disciplina*, whence Montaigne derived the example.

our lips. I have seen King Henry the Second never able to call by his right name a gentleman from this province of Gascony; and he was fain to call a lady-in-waiting of the queen by the generic name of her family, because that of her father's house seemed too uncouth. (*c*) And Socrates thinks it a matter worthy a father's attention to give well-sounding names to his children.

(*a*) Item, it is said that the foundation of Notre Dame la Grand' at Poitiers had its origin from this: that a dissolute youth who lived in that place, having procured a wench, and having, on coming to her, asked her name, which was Marie, felt himself so ardently kindled with devotion and with respect for that sacrosanct name of the Virgin, mother of our Saviour, that he not only sent her away immediately, but thenceforth reformed the remainder of his life; and in consideration of that miracle, there was built, on the spot where that young man's house stood, a chapel dedicated to the name of Our Lady, and later the church that we see there.[1] (*c*) That reformation, vocal and auricular, inspiring devoutness, went straight to the soul. This other, of the same sort, found its way through the bodily senses: Pythagoras, being in company with some young men whom, heated by merry-making, he heard planning to misuse an honest household, ordered the female musician to change the tune, and by means of slow and solemn and spondaic music gently charmed their excitement and put it to sleep.

(*a*) Item, will not posterity say that our reformation of to-day may have been fastidious and vigorous for having not only combatted errors and vices, and filled the world with devoutness, humility, obedience, peace, and every kind of virtue, but for having gone so far as to combat our old baptismal names, — Charles, Louis, François, — to people the world with Methuselahs, Ezekiels, and Malachis, much more redolent of the true faith? A gentleman, a neighbour of mine, reckoning up the advantages of the olden time in comparison with ours, did not forget to take into account the stateliness and magnificence of the names of the nobility of

[1] See Villey, *Les livres d'histoire moderne utilisés par Montaigne.* Montaigne apparently took this from Bouchet's *Annales d'Aquitaine*, but tells the story quite differently.

those days — Don Grumedan, Quedragan, Agesilan, and [to say] that simply from hearing the names ring out, he felt that they had been very different men from Pierre and Guillot and Michel.

Item, I am grateful to Jacques Amyot for having left (in the course of a French work[1]) the Latin names in full, without disguising and changing them to give them a French cadence. It seemed a little unpolished at first; but already accustomedness, from the world's high opinion of his Plutarch, has freed us from all the strangeness. I have often wished that they who write histories in Latin would leave us our names just as they are; for when they turn Vaudemont into Vallemontanus, and transform them to set them forth in Greek or Roman fashion, we know not where we are and lose knowledge of them.

To close our account, it is an ill custom, and with very evil consequences in our France, to call each one by the name of his estate and lordship, and the thing in all the world that causes most confusion and mistake regarding families. A younger son of good house, having received for his share[2] an estate by the name of which he has been known and honoured, can not honourably relinquish it; ten years after his death the estate goes to a stranger, who does the same with it; fancy where we are as to knowledge of those two men. We need not go in search of other examples than that of our own royal house, where the surnames are as many as the branches;[3] meanwhile the origin of the stock has escaped us.

(*b*) There is so much license in these changes that in my day I have seen no one raised by fortune to some extraordinary height, to whom were not incontinently attached genealogical dignities new and unknown to his father, and who was not grafted on some illustrious stock; and by good luck the most obscure families are most meet for falsification. How many gentlemen have we in France who are of royal descent by their own account? More, I believe, than of others. Was not this wittily shown by one of my friends? Several of them had assembled about a quarrel of one lord

[1] Presumably, his translation of Plutarch.

[2] *Appanage.*

[3] *Où autant de partages, autant de surnoms.*

with another, which other had, in truth, some preëminence in the way of titles and alliances above the ordinary nobility. Discussing this preëminence, each one, striving to make himself equal to him, brought forward, this man one pedigree, that one another; this one a similarity of name, that one, of arms, and another, an old family chart; and the humblest discovered himself to be the great-grandson of some king oversea. When they were going to dinner, this man,[1] instead of taking his seat, drew back with profound genuflections, begging the company to excuse him for having hitherto had the indiscretion to live with them in fellowship; but that, having been but now informed of their ancient privileges, he would begin to do them honour according to their rank; and that it was not for him to be seated amongst so many princes. After his jest, he heaped rebukes upon them: "In God's name be content (*c*) with what our fathers were content with and (*b*) with what we are; we are great enough if we know how to maintain our position; let us not disavow the fortune and rank of our ancestors, and let us cast aside these foolish fancies which can not be lacking to any one who has the effrontery to allege them."

Coats of arms are no more certain than surnames. I bear azure powdered with trefoils or, with a lion's claw of the same, armed gules, fesse. What license has this coat to remain especially in my house? A son-in-law will transport it into another family; some base-born purchaser will make his first coat of arms of it; there is nothing in which there is found more mutation and confusion. (*a*) But this discussion draws me perforce into another field. Let us search well-nigh to the bottom, and in God's name let us consider upon what foundation we establish that glory and repute for which the world turns itself topsy-turvy. Where do we fix this renown which we seek with such great pains? It is, finally, Pierre or Guillaume who bears it, who takes charge of it, and whom it concerns. (*c*) Oh, what a bold faculty is hope, which, in a mortal man and in a moment, usurps infinity, immensity, eternity, and endows its possessor's poverty with all the things he can conceive of and desire, to

[1] His friend.

such extent as she chooses.[1] Nature has given us therein a pleasing plaything. (*a*) And this Pierre or Guillaume, what is it, after all, but a name for all sorts of people? [2] or three or four strokes of a pen, in the first place so easily varied that I should like to ask to whom is due the honour of so many victories — to Guesquin, to Glesquin, or to Gueaquin? There would be much more reason here than in Lucian for Σ to bring suit against T,[3] for

> non levia aut ludicra petuntur
> Præmia; [4]

this is a serious matter; it is a question which of these letters should be rewarded for the many sieges, battles, wounds, imprisonments, and services done and suffered [5] for the crown of France by this famous constable of hers. Nicolas Denisot paid heed only to the letters of his name, and changed their whole arrangement to fashion from them the "conte d'Alsinois," to whom he presented the renown of his poetry and painting. And the historian Suetonius cared only for the meaning of his name, and having taken from it Lenis, which was the surname of his father, left Tranquillus successor to the fame of his writings.[6] Who would believe that Captain Bayard had only the honour that he borrowed from the deeds of Pierre Terrail; and that Antoine Escalin should allow so many voyages and exploits on sea and land to be stolen from him before his eyes by Captain Poulin and the baron de la Garde?

In the second place, there are strokes of the pen common to a thousand men. How many persons are there, in every family, of the same name and surname? (*c*) And in different families, times, and countries, how many? History has known three Socrates, five Platos, eight Aristotles, seven Xenophons, twenty Demetrius, twenty Theodores; and fancy how many it has not known! (*a*) Who hinders my

[1] The last clause, beginning "and endows," is not found in the *Édition Municipale*, but was added in 1595.

[2] *Pour tous potages.*

[3] See Lucian, Δικὲ Φονέντων (*The Judgement of the Vowels*).

[4] The prizes sought are not small, not those awarded in games. — Virgil, *Æneid*, XII, 764.

[5] *Faits.*

[6] See Suetonius, *Life of Otho.*

groom from calling himself Pompey the Great? But, yet worse, by what reasons, by what authority, are attached to, and fastened upon, my groom when dead, or that other man who had his head cut off in Egypt, that renowned word and those so highly honoured strokes of the pen, that they may be benefitted by them?

Id cinerem et manes credis curare sepultos? [1]

(*c*) What perception have the two companions in highest esteem among men — Epaminondas, of that glorious line which is upon our lips in his honour,—

Consiliis nostris laus est attonsa Laconum; [2]

and Africanus, of this other,—

A sole exoriente supra Mæotis paludes
Nemo est qui factis me æquiparare queat? [3]

The now living take delight in the sweetness of these words, and, excited by zeal and desire, individually transmit in imagination to dead men their own feelings, and by a deceitful hope make themselves believe that they in their turn are as capable.[4] God knows! (*a*) But

ad hæc se
Romanus, Graiusque, et Barbarus Induperator
Erexit, causas discriminis atque laboris
Inde habuit, tanto major famæ sitis est quam
Virtutis. [5]

[1] Dost thou believe that the buried ashes and manes care for this? — Virgil, *Æneid*, IV, 34. This verse was added in 1582.

[2] My deeds have destroyed the fame of the Lacedæmonians. — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, V, 17; translated from the Greek. This is the first of four elegiac verses engraved on the base of the statue of Epaminondas at Thebes. See Pausanias, IX, 15.

[3] From the place of the rising to that of the setting sun there is no one whose deeds can be deemed equal to mine. — Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, V, 17.

[4] Cf. Book II, chap. 16, *infra: Il y a une famille à Paris et à Montpelier qui se surnomme Montaigne; une autre, en Bretaine et en Saintonge, de la Montaigne. Le remuement d'une seule syllabe meslera nos fusées, de façon que j'auray part à leur gloire, et eux, à l'adventure, à ma honte.*

[5] By this were the Roman, the Greek, and the barbarian generals excited; this was because of their inducement to meet danger and toil — so much greater is the thirst for fame than for virtue. — Juvenal, X, 137.

CHAPTER XLVII

OF THE UNCERTAINTY OF OUR JUDGEMENT

THE promise of general interest which this title holds out is disappointed, for the uncertainty of judgement of which the Essay treats is that which is concerned with matters of war; and the chief interest of these pages now lies in the proofs they contain of how much of a soldier Montaigne was, and to how great a degree military affairs attracted his attention.

The various points of uncertainty of judgement he touches on here are: —

1. Whether a conquered enemy should be pursued to extremity.
2. Whether soldiers should be richly armed.
3. Whether soldiers should be suffered to brave and insult the enemy.
4. Whether generals ought to disguise themselves before a battle.
5. Whether it is best to fall upon an enemy, or to wait for an attack.
6. Whether it is best for a prince to await his enemy in his own territory, or to go to attack him upon his territory.

All these questions are illustrated by instances from ancient and modern history, giving weight to decisions now on this side, now on that, regarding the same point.

WHAT this line says is well said: —

Ἐπέων δὲ πολὺς νόμος ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα. [1]

It is entirely permissible to speak everywhere, both for and against. For example, —

> Vinse Hannibal, et non seppe usar' poi
> Ben la vittoriosa sua ventura.[2]

Whoever may choose to stand on this side,[3] and to lay stress, with men of our day, on the error of not having lately followed up our gain at Montcontour; [4] or whoever may choose to blame the King of Spain for not having

[1] Wide is the range of man's speech hither and thither. — Homer, *Iliad*, XX, 249. Montaigne translates the line after quoting it. It is one of the inscriptions on the walls of his library.

[2] Hannibal conquers and does not know how rightly to employ his victorious fortune. — Petrarch, *Sonnet* 82. The lines are a translation of Livy, XXII, 51.

[3] That is, to agree with Petrarch.

[4] October 3, 1569.

known enough to make the most of his advantage over us at Saint-Quentin,[1] it may be said that that error proceeded from a soul intoxicated with its good fortune, and from that spirit in which a man filled to repletion with the beginning of good luck, loses the appetite to add to it, already finding difficult of digestion all he has; he has his arms full of it, he can grasp no more of it, unworthy that fortune should place such a boon in his hands. For what benefit does he derive from it, if none the less he gives his enemy the means of recovering himself? What hope can there be that he may dare another time to attack those forces rallied and reformed, and armed anew with anger and revenge, since he dared not, or knew not enough to, pursue them all broken and terrified?

Dum fortuna calet, dum conficit omnia terror.[2]

But, in fine, what better can he expect than what he has just lost? It is not as in fencing, when the number of hits decides the winning; so long as the enemy is on his feet, it is all to be done over again; a victory is no victory if it does not end the war. In that encounter in which Cæsar was worsted, near the town of Oricum, he cast it in the teeth of Pompey's soldiers that he would have been lost if their leader had known how to win a fight; and he followed on Pompey's heels in very different fashion when it came his turn.[3] But why shall we not also say, on the contrary, that it is the effect of an impetuous and insatiable spirit not to know how to make an end of its avidity; and it is abusing the favours of God to seek to make them exceed the measure he has prescribed for them; and that to rush back into danger after victory is to place victory once more in the lap of fortune; that one of the greatest signs of wisdom in the art of war is not to drive one's enemy to despair.[4]

Sylla and Marius, in the Social War, having defeated the

[1] August 10, 1557.

[2] When fortune is animated, and terror subdues all things. — Lucan, VII, 734.

[3] *Et lui chaussa bien autrement les esperons quand ce fut à son tour.* At Pharsalia. See Plutarch, *Life of Cæsar*, and *Life of Pompey*.

[4] Cf. Jean Bodin, *Les six livres de la République*, V, 5; Rabelais, I, 43; G. du Bellay, *Instructions sur le faict de la guerre*, II, 2.

Marsæ, seeing still a remnant returning in despair to throw themselves upon them like wild beasts, did not think it well to await them. Had not the ardour of monsieur de Foix led him to pursue too closely the stragglers from the victory at Ravenna,[1] he would not have marred it by his death. But yet the remembrance of his recent example served to save monsieur d'Anguien from a similar disaster at Serisoles.[2]

It is dangerous to attack a man whom you have deprived of any other means of escape than fighting; for an impetuous schoolmistress is necessity. (*c*) *Gravissimi sunt morsus irritatæ necessitatis.*[3]

(*b*) Vincitur haud gratis jugulo qui provocat hostem:[4]

(*c*) That is why Pharax prevented the King of Lacedæmon, who had just won the day against the Mantinæans, from assaulting a thousand Argives who had escaped in a body from the rout; instead, he made him let them slip away unhindered, in order not to put to the test valour spurred on and angered by ill-fortune.[5] (*a*) Clodomire, King of Aquitaine, after his victory, pursuing Gondemar, King of Bourgogne, conquered and fleeing, forced him to turn about; and this persistence deprived him of the fruit of his victory, for he died on the field.[6]

In like manner, to him who should have to choose whether to keep his soldiers richly and sumptuously armed, or, simply, armed as need requires, it would appear in support of the first side,— on which were Sertorius, Philopœmen, Brutus,[7] Cæsar,[8] and others,— that it is always a spur to honour and pride for the soldier to find himself handsomely

[1] April 11, 1512.

[2] Or Cerisoles. A victory won by the French under François de Bourbon, comte d'Enghien, over the Spaniards under the marchese del Guasto, April 14, 1544.

[3] The most grievous stings are those of angered necessity. — Justus Lipsius, *Politics*, V, 18; after Porcius Latro.

[4] He is not vanquished without cost who offers his throat to the enemy. — Lucan, IV, 275.

[5] See Diodorus Siculus, XII, 25.

[6] See Jean Bouchet, *Annales d'Aquitaine.*

[7] See Plutarch, in the *Life* of each of these three.

[8] See Suetonius, *Life of Cæsar.*

arrayed, and a reason for more stubbornness in battle, having his arms to save as being his riches and his possessions. (*c*) Xenophon says that this is the reason why the Asiatics took with them in their wars their wives and concubines, with their most valuable jewels and treasures.[1] (*a*) But it could be alleged on the other side that the care of self-preservation should rather be lessened for the soldier than increased; that by this course [2] he will doubly dread risking his safety; moreover, that the desire of the enemy for victory is heightened by such rich spoils; and it has been observed that in former days this wonderfully emboldened the Romans when encountering the Samnites.[3] (*b*) Antiochus showing to Hannibal the army that he had prepared against them,[4] sumptuous and magnificent with every sort of equipment, and asking him, "Will the Romans be satisfied with this army?" — "Will they be satisfied with it?" he replied; "indeed, yes, however great their avarice." [5] (*a*) Lycurgus not only forbade his troops all richness in their equipment, but also forbade them to despoil their conquered foes, desiring, he said, that poverty and frugality should shine forth with all else of the battle.[6]

In sieges and elsewhere, when occasion brings us near the enemy, we readily allow the soldiers to defy them, to show contempt and to insult them with all manner of taunts. And this is not without apparent reason; for it is no small advantage to take from them all hope of mercy and accord by making clear to them that there is no longer any possibility of expecting it from him whom they have so grossly outraged, and that there remains no help but in victory. Yet Vitellius had a contrary experience; for, having to deal with Otho, whose soldiers — long unaccustomed to active war and enervated by city pleasures — were weaker in courage, he so angered them at last by his cutting words, upbraiding them with pusillanimity and with desire for the ladies and

[1] See Xenophon, *Cyropædeia*, IV, 3.
[2] That is, if he be richly armed.
[3] See Livy, IX, 40.
[4] The Romans.
[5] See Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticæ*, V, 5.
[6] See Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians*.

the merrymakings they had left at Rome, that he thus restored their hearts to their bodies,[1] which no exhortations had availed to do, and himself drew them on to fall upon him, where they could not be driven.[2] And, in truth, when they are insults that cut to the quick, they can easily bring it about that he who was working sluggishly in his king's quarrel will enter with a different spirit into his own.

When we consider of how much importance is the safety of the commander of an army, and that the enemy's aim is directed chiefly at that head which all the others cling to and depend upon, it would seem that we can not question the plan, which we see to have been followed by many great commanders, of impersonating some one else and disguising themselves on going into the fight; but the disadvantage incurred by this means is no less than that which it is thought to avoid; for, the commander not being recognised by his own troops, the courage that they derive from his example and his presence fails them forthwith, and, losing sight of his usual insignia and standards, they suppose him either to be dead, or to have fled despairing of success. And as a matter of experience, we see that it [3] sometimes favours the one side and sometimes the other. The hap of Pyrrhus in his battle against the Consul Levinus in Italy supports both aspects: for having chosen to disguise himself in the armour of Demogacles, and having given him his own, he indeed undoubtedly saved his life, but he came near the other disaster[4] of losing the day. (*c*) Alexander,[5] Cæsar, Lucullus liked to make themselves conspicuous in battle by rich accoutrements and armour of brilliant and unusual colours; Agis,[6] Agesilaus, and that great Gylippus, contrariwise, went to the war inconspicuous in appearance and without imperial array.

(*a*) Among the criticisms of Pompey's conduct of the battle of Pharsalia is that he kept his army without mov-

[1] *Il leur remit par ce moyen le cœur au ventre.*

[2] See Plutarch, *Life of Otho.*

[3] That is, the device of disguising oneself.

[4] *Mais aussi il en cuida encourir l'autre inconvenient.* See Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus*, where the name is Megacles.

[5] See Idem, *Life of Alexander.*

[6] See Idem, *Lives of Agis and Cleomenes.*

ing,[1] awaiting the enemy: "because" (I shall here borrow Plutarch's very words, which are better than mine) "that loses the force which the act of running imparts to the first blows, and likewise prevents the leaping of the combatants upon one another, which is wont, more than any thing else, to fill them with impetuosity and fury when they rush violently against one another, inflaming their courage by outcries and by speed; and, so to speak, makes the hot blood of the soldiers cold and sluggish." [2] This is what he says about this class of facts.[3] But if Cæsar had been worsted, might it not have been as well said that, on the contrary, the strongest and steadiest position is that where they stand fixed without budging, and that those who come to a halt, confining their strength within themselves and saving it for the time of need, have a great advantage over those who have bestirred themselves [4] and have already spent half their breath in their onrush? Besides, an army being a body of so many different parts, it is impossible that it should move, under this excitement, with such accuracy of movement as not to change or break its due marshalling, and that the most active should not be at grips with the enemy before his comrade can aid him. (*c*) In that deplorable battle between the two Persian brothers,[5] the Lacedæmonian Clearchus, who commanded the Greeks of Cyrus's party, led them very quietly [6] to the attack, without haste; but, when within about fifty paces, he started running, hoping, for the short distance, to keep their order and husband their breath, giving them at the same time the advantage, both for their persons and their shooting,[7] of impetuosity. (*a*) Others, with regard to their armies, have decided this question thus: "If your enemies rush upon

[1] *Pied coy.*

[2] See Plutarch, *Life of Pompey.* Plutarch puts the criticism in Cæsar's mouth. The "very words" are, of course, those of Amyot's translation of Plutarch.

[3] *Voila ce qu'il dict pour ce rolle.*

[4] *Qui est esbranlé.*

[5] Cyrus and Artaxerxes, in 401 B.C. See Xenophon, *Anabasis*, I, 8. 17, 19. Xenophon does not mention Clearchus.

[6] *Tout bellement.*

[7] *Pour leurs personnes, et pour leurs armes à trait.*

you, await them without moving; if they await you without moving, rush upon them.[1]

At the time of the entry of the Emperor Charles the Fifth into Provence, King Francis was in a position to choose whether to go to meet him in Italy or to await him on his own territory; and although he considered how great an advantage it is to keep one's land [2] clean and undefiled by the troubles of war, to the end that, its strength being unimpaired, it may successfully supply funds and furtherance at need; that the necessities of war lead to devastation at every turn, which it is hard to have inflicted upon us in our own domains, and that the peasant does not endure such spoliation so patiently from those of his own side as from the enemy, so that it may very readily kindle sedition and troubles among us; that the liberty to steal and to pillage, which can not be allowed in one's own country, is a great relief to the tedium of war; and that it is difficult to keep him to his duty who has no hope of profit beyond his pay, when he is only two steps from his wife and his house; that the expenses always fall on the host;[3] that there is more excitement in attacking than in defending; and that the shock of a battle in our midst [4] is so violent that it is difficult to prevent its shaking the whole body, seeing there is no passion so contagious as fear, and none that is so easily taken on trust, or that spreads more rapidly; and that there is danger that the cities which have heard the crash of the tempest at their gates, which have gathered in their officers and soldiers still trembling and breathless, will in the heat of the moment fall into some evil course — yet, notwithstanding, he chose to recall the forces which he had beyond the mountains and to let the enemy come to him. For it may be thought, on the other hand, that, being at home and among

[1] See Plutarch, *Conjugal Precepts*. Plutarch says, according to Amyot: *Si les ennemis leur venoient courir sus avec grands cris, qu'ils les receussent sans mot dire: et au contraire, s'ils venoient les assaillir en silence, qu'eulx courussent avec grands cris à l'encontre.* Either Montaigne's memory betrayed him, therefore, or he had some other authority in mind.

[2] *Maison.*

[3] *Que celuy qui met la nappe tombe toujours des despens.*

[4] *Dans nos entrailles.*

his friends, he could not fail to have all manner of resources: the rivers and passes, being under his control, would bring him both provisions and funds in all security and without need of an escort; that he would find his subjects the more devoted to him as the danger was nearer to them; that, having so many towns and barriers to safeguard him, it would be for him to give permission for the battle [1] according to his opportunity and advantage; and that, if it pleased him to temporise, he could, under cover and at his ease, see his enemy dance attendance in the cold, and find defeat through the difficulties which would beset him, engaged in a hostile country, where neither before nor behind him nor on either side would there be any thing which did not oppose him; no means of refreshing or of increasing his army if attacked by disease, or of lodging his wounded under cover; no money, no provisions, save at the spear-point; no leisure to rest or take breath; no knowledge of localities or of regions which could protect him from ambuscades and surprises; and, if he should lose a battle, no way to save the remains of his army.[2] And there was no lack of examples on either side. Scipio thought it much better to attack his enemy's territory in Africa than to defend his own and fight him in Italy where he was, and it turned out well for him; [3] but, on the other hand, Hannibal, in that same war, ruined himself by having abandoned the conquest of a foreign country to go back and

[1] *De donner loy au combat;* that is, to choose the moment for the battle to begin.

[2] "See *Mémoires* du Bellay, VI, 184, and especially G. du Bellay, *Instructions sur le faict de la guerre*, II, 3, where the arguments on both sides are given at great length, and where the question is generalised as by Montaigne. See also a discussion of the same question in Bodin's *République*, V, 5, and especially Machiavelli's *Discourse on the First Decade of Livy*, where numerous arguments and examples from ancient times are set forth on both sides, many of which arguments and examples are found in Montaigne. But du Bellay, unlike Montaigne, who reaches no conclusion, decides distinctly in favour of the offensive, while Machiavelli advises those who are well armed to await the enemy on their own soil, and those who are ill equipped to carry the war into their neighbour's territory." — Note of M. Villey in *Édition Municipale*.

[3] See Plutarch, *Life of Scipio;* Livy, XXIX, 24–35. It was in the Second Punic War.

defend his own.[1] The Athenians, having allowed the enemy to enter upon their territory to go into Sicily, had the opposite fortune; but Agathocles, King of Syracuse, had fortune on his side, when he went into Africa and deserted the war in his own land. So we are wont often to say, with good reason, that events and results depend for the most part, notably in war, upon fortune, which will not arrange itself and subject itself to our judgement and foresight, as these lines say: —

> Et male consultis pretium est; prudentia fallax;
> Nec fortuna probat causas sequiturque merentes;
> Sed vaga per cunctos nullo discrimine fertur.
> Scilicet est aliud quod nos cogatque regatque
> Majus, et in proprias ducat mortalia leges.[2]

Indeed, taking it rightly, it seems that our opinions and determinations depend quite as much upon fortune, and that it involves our judgement also in its confusion and uncertainty. (*c*) We reason at random and rashly, as Timæus says in Plato, because our judgements, like ourselves, partake largely of chance.[3]

CHAPTER XLVIII

OF STEEDS[4]

This is again an Essay more or less about warfare; but it has a more personal note of interest than the last: for Montaigne was himself never so content as when on horseback — "It is the place in which I find myself best off, whether well or sick." And naturally he cared for all kinds of horses, even *destriers*, of which name the Essay opens by offering an explanation. Then it speaks of the horses (and their names) that were anciently so trained that the rider could change from one to an-

[1] See Plutarch, *Life of Hannibal;* Livy, XXX, 19–35.

[2] And bad advice is of value; prudence is deceptive; fortune neither examines into causes nor accompanies the deserving, but wanders among all men, moved by no discrimination. There is indeed a stronger power which constrains us and guides us, and conducts earthly things by its own laws. — Manilius, IV, 95.

[3] See Plato, *Timæus.*

[4] *Des Destries*, usually assumed to be a misprint for *Destriers.*

other while in motion. And then Montaigne refers to what appears to have been the training of horses in his own day, "to succor their masters," and gives two illustrations of the same sort of training, one from ancient and one from modern history. Thence he passes to the training of the horses of the Mamelukes.

Next, he speaks of the excellence of the horsemanship of Cæsar and of Pompey; and of the horses of Cæsar and Alexander, a passage which in 1588 followed (more naturally) the "Roman nobles." Then of his own love of riding and its healthfulness. Then of the Parthian habit of being constantly on horseback. Then of cavalry being dismounted by their officers to prevent their running (or rather riding) away; and of the Romans always taking possession of the horses as well as the arms of the peoples they conquered; adding a curious fact, that at that day no Christian or Jew in Turkey was allowed to own a horse.

These last matters were inserted in 1595; originally the line of thought ran on naturally from the fact of the Roman captains dismounting their soldiers to the fact of the French, during the English wars, finding it to their advantage to fight on foot. Thence he passes to the consideration of the best kind of arms, and has no good word to say for firearms: of pistols, "I hope we shall some day give up the use." He prefers the ancient *phalarica*, which he describes with other inventions, whereby the Italians of old supplied the want of powder and shot.

All this learning, and more, belongs to 1595. In 1588 he was thinking rather of Maistre Pierre Pol — why and wherefore does not very clearly appear; apparently only because he had been reading Monstrelet, and was going to quote him on the subject (to which he here recurs) of the training of horses. He quotes Cæsar, too, and cites the Massilians, who rode without saddle or bridle, which Montaigne says that he had, with wonder, seen done. Then he quotes the letters of Guevara, with a fine slash of criticism at them; and then *The Courtier*, which we may believe he had liked better. All these quotations are about riding on mules, which, he adds, the Abyssinians think dignified — the Abyssinians whose prince is "le Prettejan," or, as we know him in English, Prester John. Then we are told about the horses of the Assyrians and the horses of Cyrus, and how the Scythians and the Turks, the Muscovites and the Tartars, drank their horses' blood, and the Cretans their urine.

There follows a paragraph on the subject, always interesting to Montaigne (and to us), about "these newly discovered people of the Indies" and how they believed the horses of the Spaniards, as well as their masters, to be superior beings. Then he passes over to the East Indies and elephant- and camel- and ox-riding, and quotes "some one in our time." (How many books he read!) And then — oh, why! — Quintus Fabius Maximus Rutilianus comes plunging in, fighting against the Samnites! and Quintus Fulvius Flaccus and the Celtiberians!

Then comes "le duc de Muscovie" paying reverence to the Tartars: and the Emperor Bajazet escaping from Tamburlane, and Crœsus meeting serpents; and we have a perfectly "displaced" sentence about "un

cheval entier" and the Lacedæmonians clipping the horses they led in triumph, followed by another sentence about Alexander.

By this time we have lost all thread of continuous interest, and we accept with what gratitude we can a page of mere entertainment about monsieur de Carnavalet, and a man at Constantinople, and the Prince of Sulmone at Naples, and feats of circus-riding.

HERE have I become a grammarian, I who never learned any language but by rote, and who do not yet know what adjective and conjunctive and ablative mean.[1] It seems to me that I have heard that the Romans had horses which they called *funales* or *dextrarios*,[2] which were led on the right,[3] or stationed in relays, so as to be quite fresh when needed; and hence it is that we call war-horses *destriers*. And our romances commonly say *adestrer* instead of *accompagner*. They also called *desulterios equos* those horses which were so trained that, as they ran at utmost speed, side by side, without bridle, without saddle, the Roman nobles, even when in complete armour, leaped in full course back and forth from one to the other. (*c*) The Numidian men-at-arms led each a second horse, to change in the hottest of the conflict: *quibus, desultorum in modum, binos trahentibus equos, inter acerrimam sæpe pugnam, in recentem equum ex fesso armatis transsultare mos erat; tanta velocitas ipsis, tamque docile equorum genus.*[4]

Horses are frequently to be found trained to succour their masters, to attack any one who shows them a naked sword, to throw themselves with feet and teeth upon those who attack and defy them; but it happens often that they are more harmful to friends than to enemies; moreover, you can not part them at will when they once feel themselves grappled, and you remain at the mercy of their fight. It was a rude mischance for Artibius, general of the Persian army, fighting against Onesilus, King of Salamis, man to man, that he was mounted on a horse trained in this school, for

[1] Cf. Book I, chap. 26, p. 226, *supra*.

[2] See Suetonius, *Life of Tiberius*.

[3] *A destre*.

[4] Who, like vaulters in the circus, took with them two horses; and often when the battle was hottest were accustomed to leap in full armour from a tired horse to a fresh one; so agile were they, and so docile their breed of horses. — Livy, XXIII, 29.5.

it was the cause of his death; the squire [1] of Onesilus having struck [2] him with a scythe between the shoulders as he reared up before his master.[3] And what the Italians report, that in the battle of Fornova the king's [4] horse freed himself by plunging and kicking from the enemies who pressed upon him, and that, but for that, he [5] was lost — if it is true, it was a great piece of luck. The Mamelukes boast that they have the most nimble war-horses in the world; that by nature and by habit they are trained to know and to recognise and discern the enemy whom they must throw themselves upon with teeth and feet, according to the word or sign given them, and likewise to pick up with their mouths the lances and darts on the field and give them to their riders when they so command.[6] (*a*) It is said of Cæsar and also of the great Pompey that, among their other eminent qualities, they were very skilful horsemen; [7] and of Cæsar that, in his youth, mounted on a horse bareback and without bridle, he, with his hands behind his back, made him go where he wished.[8] While Nature chose to make of this personage and of Alexander two miracles of military achievement, you might say that she also did her best in arming them beyond the ordinary: for every one knows of Alexander's horse, Bucephalus, that he had a head resembling that of a bull; that he would not suffer himself to be mounted by any one but his master, could be trained by nobody else, was honoured after his death, and had a city named for him.[9] Cæsar, too, had another whose forefeet were like those of a man, the hoofs being divided like toes; he could be neither ridden nor

[1] *Coustillier.*

[2] *Accueilli.*

[3] That is, Onesilus. See Herodotus, V, 111, 112.

[4] Charles VIII of France.

[5] The king. See Paulus Jovius, *History of his Time;* Comines, VIII, 6.

[6] See Paulus Jovius, *ubi supra.* In this passage about the Mamelukes the translation follows the text of 1595, the Bordeaux copy of 1588 being imperfect, owing to the fact that part of the sentence was cut off in rebinding.

[7] See Plutarch, *Life of Pompey.*

[8] See Idem, *Life of Cæsar.* Montaigne may have taken this from Beroald's Commentary on Suetonius's *Life of Cæsar.*

[9] See Aulus Gellius, V, 2.

trained by anybody but Cæsar, who dedicated his statue, after his death, to the goddess Venus.[1]

I am never ready to dismount when I am on horseback, for it is the place in which I find myself best off, whether well or sick. (*c*) Plato recommends it for the health;[2] (*a*) Pliny, too, says that it is salutary for the stomach and the joints.[3] Let us go on with this, since we are here. We read in Xenophon a law[4] forbidding a man who had a horse to travel on foot.[5] Trogus and Justinus say that the Parthians were accustomed, not only to make war on horseback, but also to transact all their public and private affairs, to bargain and parley, converse and take the air;[6] and that, among them, the most marked difference between free men and slaves was that the former went on horseback, the latter on foot:[7] (*c*) an ordinance established by King Cyrus. (*a*) There are many instances in Roman history (and Suetonius remarks it more especially of Cæsar[8]) of captains who, on finding themselves hard pressed, ordered their cavalry to dismount, to deprive the soldiers of all hope of flight, (*c*) and for the advantage that they anticipated in that sort of fighting, *quo haud dubie superat Romanus*,[9] says Livy. Therefore it was that the first provision they[10] made use of to bridle rebellion among newly conquered nations was to deprive them of arms and horses. It is because of this that we see so frequently in Cæsar: *arma proferri*, *jumenta produci*, *obsides dari jubet*.[11] The Great Turk[12] does not to-day allow either

[1] See Suetonius, *Life of Cæsar*, and Beroald's Commentary.

[2] In the *Laws*.

[3] See Pliny, *Natural History*, XXVIII, 14. This, too, Montaigne probably took from Beroald's Commentary.

[4] In 1580–1588: *loy de Cyrus*.

[5] See Xenophon, *Cyropædeia*, IV, 3.22. Probably taken from Beroald's Commentary.

[6] *Se promener*.

[7] See Justinus, XLI, 2. Probably taken from Beroald's Commentary.

[8] See Suetonius, *Life of Cæsar*.

[9] In which doubtless the Roman excels. — Livy, IX, 22.10.

[10] The Romans.

[11] He commands their arms to be brought forth, their horses to be led out, and hostages to be given. — Cæsar, *De Bello Gallico*, VII, 11.2, and *passim*.

[12] *Le Grand Seigneur*.

Christian or Jew — of those who are under his rule — to have a horse of his own. (*a*) Our ancestors, notably at the time of the English war, in serious engagements and pitched battles, fought dismounted most of the time, entrusting to nothing but their own strength, and the force of their courage and of their bodies, matters so dear as honour and life. (*c*) Whatever Chrysanthes, in Xenophon, may say about it,[1] (*a*) you blend your worth and your fortunes with those of your horse: his wounds and his death involve your own; his terror or his impetuosity makes you either rash or cowardly; if he is hard-mouthed or needs the spur, it is your honour that answers for it. For this reason it does not seem strange to me that such combats[2] should be more stubborn and fiercer than those fought on horseback.

(*b*) Cedebant pariter, pariterque ruebant
Victores victique, neque his fuga nota neque illis.[3]

(*c*) Their battles we see to have been much better contested; to-day there are only routs: *primus clamor atque impetus rem decernit.*[4] (*a*) And whatever we bring into coöperation with ourselves in so great a risk should be as much as possible under our control; as I should advise choosing the shortest weapons and those we can best answer for. It is much more in conformity with reason to make sure of a sword that we hold in our hand than of a bullet that escapes from our pistol, in which there are several parts, — the powder, the flint, the lock, — the least of which, if it fail, will make your fortune fail. (*b*) The hit that the air directs has little certainty.

Et quo ferre velint permittere vulnera ventis:
Ensis habet vires, et gens quæcunque virorum est,
Bella gerit gladiis.[5]

[1] See Xenophon, *Cyropædeia*, IV, 3.15–21.

[2] That is, those fought on foot.

[3] The victors and the vanquished equally succeeded and equally failed; for neither the one nor the other knew flight. — Virgil, *Æneid*, X, 756. The reading *cedebant* (which has been amended to *cædebant*) is the text of the Venetian edition of 1539.

[4] The first shout and onset decides the issue. — Livy, XXV, 41.6.

[5] And to leave to the wind the direction of the blows: the sword has force, and all manly nations fight with the sword. — Lucan, VIII, 384.

(*a*) But as for this weapon,[1] I shall speak of it more fully when I compare ancient weapons with ours; and save for the startlingness of the sound, with which now every one has become familiar, I consider it a weapon of little effect, and hope that some day we shall give up the use of it. (*c*) That which the Italians [2] used, as a missile and with flame, was more terrifying. They called *phalarica* a certain kind of javelin armed at the end with an iron head three feet long, so that it could pierce through and through a man in armour; and it was sometimes thrown by the hand in the field, sometimes by machines in defence of besieged places; the shaft, wrapped in tow tarred and oiled, took fire in its flight, and attaching itself to the body or the shield, took away all use of weapons and of limbs. It seems to me, however, that, in coming to close quarters, it might be equally a hindrance to the assailant, and that the field, strewn with those burning bits, would cause in the fray like damage to both sides.

> Magnum stridens contorta phalarica venit,
> Fulminis acta modo.[3]

They had other fashions in which usage directed them,— and which seem to us, from inexperience, incredible,— by which they made up for the lack of our powder and bullets. They threw their javelins with such force that often they pierced with them two shields and two men in armour, and fastened them together. Nor were the shots from their slings less accurate and far-reaching: *saxis globosis funda mare apertum incessentes, coronas modici circuli, magno ex intervallo loci, assueti trajicere: non capita modo hostium vulnerabant, sed quem locum destinassent.*[4] Their battering-

[1] The pistol. "The essay which Montaigne announces here, and which he actually wrote, has not come down to us: it was stolen from him by a secretary. Cf. *infra*, Book II, chaps. 9 and 37 (near the beginning)." — M. Villey.

[2] That is, the Romans.

[3] The hurled phalaric came with a loud whistle, thrown like a thunderbolt. — Virgil, *Æneid*, IX, 705.

[4] Practised to throw from slings round stones into the open sea, and to hit circles of moderate size from a great distance, they wounded not merely their enemies' heads, but the exact part they aimed at. — Livy, XXXVIII, 29.4 and 7.

pieces resembled ours, not only in effect, but also in the horrible din: *ad ictus mœnium cum terribili sonitu editos, pavor et trepidatio cepit.*[1] The Gauls, our cousins in Asia, hated those treacherous flying weapons: they used to fight with greater courage hand to hand. *Non tam patentibus plagis moventur, ubi latior quam altior plaga est, etiam gloriosus se pugnare putant; idem, cum aculeus sagittæ aut glandis abditæ introrsus tenui vulnere in speciem urit, tum, in rabiem et pudorem tam parvæ perimentis pestis versi, prosternunt corpora humi;*[2] a picture very like that of a harquebus shot. The ten thousand Greeks, in their long and famous retreat, encountered a nation that marvellously endamaged them with great and strong bows, and such long arrows that, taking them in the hand, one could throw them like a dart, and they would pierce a shield and a man in armour from front to back.[3] The machines that Dionysius invented, at Syracuse, for firing large, heavy arrows and stones of terrifying size, with such a long flight and force, very closely resembled our inventions.[4]

(*a*) Also must not be forgotten the amusing attitude on his mule of one Maître Pierre Pol, doctor of theology, who, Monstrelet reports, was accustomed to ride through the streets of Paris sidewise, as women do.[5] He says also, in another place, that the Gascons had terrible horses, accustomed to turn while running, of which the French, Picards, Flemings, and Brabantins made a great miracle because they were not used to seeing the like; these are his words.[6] Cæsar, speaking of the Suevi, says: "In the encounters which take place on horseback, they very often leap to the

[1] When the blows on the walls resounded with a terrible din, terror and agitation followed. — Livy, XXXVIII, 5.

[2] They are not so much perturbed by visible wounds; when the wound is broader than deep, they even think to fight the more gloriously; but when they are wounded by the point of an arrow or by a ball that has hidden itself within with a wound slight in appearance, then, in rage and shame to die of so slight a hurt, they throw themselves on the ground. — *Ibid.*, 21.

[3] See Xenophon, *Anabasis*, IV, 2.28.

[4] See Diodorus Siculus, XIV, 12.

[5] See Enguerrand Monstrelet, *Chroniques*, I, 46.

[6] *Ibid.*, I, 56. The editions of 1580–1588 add at this point: *Je ne sçay quel maniement ce pouvoit estre, si ce n'est celuy de nos passades.*

ground, to fight on foot, having schooled their horses not to stir meanwhile, having recourse to them again quickly, if there is occasion; and, in accordance with their custom, there is nothing so base and effeminate as to use saddles of any sort; [1] and they despise those who use them; so that, when themselves very few in number, they do not fear to attack many such."[2]

(*b*) A thing that I was used to marvel at — to see a horse trained to be guided in all ways by a riding-rod, the reins dropped over his ears — was common among the Massilians, who used their horses without saddle and without bridle.

> Et gens quæ nudo residens Massilia dorso,
> Ora levi flectit frænorum nescia, virga.[3]

(*c*) Et Numidæ infræni cingunt.[4]

Equi sine frenis, deformis ipse cursus, rigida cervice et extento capite currentium.[5]

(*a*) King Alphonso,[6] he who created in Spain the order of Knights of the Band, or the Scarf, gave them this among other rules, that they should not ride a mule, under penalty of a fine of a silver marc, as I have lately learned from the Letters of Guevara, of which they who have called them "golden" have formed a judgement very different from mine.[7] (*c*) *The Courtier*[8] says that before his time it was a disgrace for a nobleman to ride a mule. The Abyssinians, on the contrary, the higher they are in rank and the nearer to Prester John, their master, affect riding mules as a mark

[1] *Selles et bardelles.*

[2] See Cæsar, *De Bello Gallico*, IV, 1.

[3] And the Massilian people who, sitting bare-back, ignorant of reins, manage their horses with a light rod. — Lucan, IV, 682.

[4] And the Numidians, who ride without bridles, surround [thy country]. — Virgil, *Æneid*, IV, 41. Æneas is speaking to Dido.

[5] Their horses are without bridles; their gait is awkward, their necks are stiff, and they run with their heads stretched out. — Livy, XXXV, 11.

[6] Alphonso XI of Leon and Castile. See Antoine de Guevara, *Epîtres Dorées*. This is the French title of Guterry's translation (1565).

[7] The Essay ended here in 1580.

[8] By Baldasarre Castiglione; book II, chap. 3.

of dignity.[1] Xenophon says that the Assyrians always kept their horses hobbled in their stables, they were so vicious and untractable; and that it took so much time to unloose them and put their trappings on that, since this delay would be harmful in war if they were suddenly surprised by their enemies, they never established themselves in a camp that was not entrenched and fortified.[2] His Cyrus, so great a master in the knowledge of horses, made his horses pay for their food,[3] and gave them nothing to eat until they had earned it by sweating at some exercise.[4] (*b*) The Scythians, when necessity pressed them in war, drew blood from their horses and drank it and were nourished by it.

Venit et epoto Sarmata pastus equo.[5]

The people of Crete, besieged by Metellus, found themselves in such dearth of all other beverages, that they had to avail themselves of the urine of their horses.[6] (*c*) To show how much more economically the Turkish armies are managed and maintained than ours, they say that not only do the soldiers drink nothing but water and eat only rice and pulverised salted meat, of which each man easily carries upon himself a month's supply, but that they can live also on the blood of their horses, like the Tartars and Muscovites; and they salt it.[7]

(*b*) These newly discovered peoples of the Indies, when the Spaniards arrived there, thought that they, men and horses alike, were either gods, or beings superior to their own nature in nobleness. Some of them, after having been conquered, coming to the men to sue for peace and pardon, and to bring them gold and provisions, did not fail to go to the horses to offer them as much, with a set speech exactly

[1] "Paulus Jovius, in the *History of his Time* (XVIII), has something to say of the mules of the Abyssinians, but I have found no source for Montaigne's exact statement." — M. Villey.

[2] See Xenophon, *Cyropædeia*, III, 3.26, 27.

[3] *Mettoit les chevaux de son escot.*

[4] See *Ibid.*, VIII, 1.38.

[5] And the Sarmatian comes, who drinks the blood of horses. — Martial, *Liber Spectaculorum*, III, 4.

[6] See Valerius Maximus, VII, 6, *ext.* 1.

[7] See Paulus Jovius, *Ordo ac Disciplina Turcicæ Militiæ.*

like that to the men, taking their neighing for words of accord and truce.[1] In the nearer Indies,[2] it was formerly the chief and royal honour to bestride an elephant; the next, to go in a coach drawn by four horses; the third, to be mounted on a camel; the last and lowest degree, to be carried or drawn by a single horse.[3] (*c*) Some one in our day writes that he saw in that region countries where they ride oxen with pack-saddles, stirrups, and bridles, and think themselves well mounted. Quintus Fabius Maximus Rutilianus,[4] in battle against the Samnites, seeing that his horsemen, in three or four charges, had failed to break through the enemy's forces, decided that they should unbridle their horses, and spur their hardest; so that, nothing being of avail to stop them, overthrowing weapons and men, they opened the way for their foot-soldiers, who completed a most bloody defeat.[5] Quintus Fulvius Flaccus commanded the like against the Celtiberians: *Id cum majore vi equorum facietis, si effrenatos in hostes equos immittitis; quod sæpe romanos equites cum laude fecisse sua, memoriæ proditum est. Detractisque frenis, bis ultro citroque cum magna strage hostium, infractis omnibus hastis, transcurrerunt.*[6]

(*b*) The Duke of Muscovy formerly owed to the Tartars this act of homage,[7] that, when they sent ambassadors to him, he went out to meet them on foot, and offered them a goblet of mare's milk (a beverage which they delight in); and if, while drinking, a single drop fell on the manes of their horses, he was bound to lick it off with his tongue.[8] In Russia, the army that the Emperor Bajazet had sent thither

[1] See Lopez de Gomara, *History of Fernando Cortez.*

[2] *Aux Indes de decà.*

[3] See Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander the Great.*

[4] Rullianus.

[5] See Livy, VIII, 30.

[6] "You will make the charge with greater force if you urge your horses unbridled against the foe. That the Roman cavalry often did this to their advantage is made known by history." They took off the bridles and passed in full career, back and forth, with great slaughter of the enemy and breaking all their spears to pieces. — Idem, XL, 40.5–7. The first two sentences are from an address of Flaccus to his troops. The last describes their obedience.

[7] *Cette reverence.*

[8] See H. de Fulstin, *Histoire des Rois de Pologne.*

was overwhelmed with such a terrible tempest of snow that, to shelter themselves from it and escape the cold, many of them thought it well to kill and disembowel their horses, in order to crawl inside them and enjoy that vital warmth.[1] (*c*) Bajazet, after the fierce fight wherein he was cut to pieces by Tamburlane, would have escaped swiftly on an Arabian mare, had he not been obliged to let her drink her fill on crossing a stream; which made her so weak and chilled that he was afterward very easily overtaken by those who pursued him.[2] It is said truly that it lessens their speed to let them make water; but as for drinking, I should have supposed that it would have refreshed and strengthened her. Crœsus, while marching near the city of Sardis, found waste lands where there was a great quantity of serpents, which the horses in his army ate with good appetite; which was an evil omen for his affairs, says Herodotus.[3]

(*b*) We call a horse entire [4] which has mane and ears; and no others will pass muster. The Lacedæmonians, having defeated the Athenians in Sicily, on returning from the victory in state to the city of Syracuse, among other bravadoes caused the horses to be shaved, and led them thus in triumph.[5] Alexander fought a nation, the Dahas, who went to the war, two together, armed, on horseback; but in the fray one dismounted in turn, and fought now on foot, now mounted.[6]

(*c*) I think that in skill and grace on horseback no nation excels us. "A good horseman," in our customary speech, seems to refer more to courage than to skill. The most expert man, the most assured and most graceful in training a horse properly [7] that I have known, was, in my opinion, monsieur de Carnevalet, who performed this service for our King Henry the Second. I have seen a man gallop standing on his saddle, take off his saddle, and, on returning, lift it up, readjust it, and resume his seat on it, going all the time at

[1] See H. de Fulstin, *ubi supra.*
[2] See Chalcondylas, *History of the Decline of the Greek Empire*, III, 12.
[3] See Herodotus, I, 78.
[4] *Nous appellons un cheval entier.*
[5] See Plutarch, *Life of Nicias.*
[6] See Quintus Curtius, VII, 7.32.
[7] *A mener un cheval à raison.*

full speed; and having passed beyond a cap, make good shots at it with his bow behind his back; pick up whatever he chose, throwing himself to the ground with one foot and keeping the other in the stirrup; and other like tricks, by which he made his living. (*b*) There have been seen in my time, at Constantinople, two men on one horse, who, at his fastest, threw themselves alternately to the ground and into the saddle; and one who bridled and completely accoutred his horse with his teeth alone; another who rode at full speed between two horses, with one foot on one saddle and one on the other, carrying a second man on his shoulders; this second man, standing erect upon him, making as they ran very good shots with his bow; several who gallopped with the legs in the air, and the head resting on the saddle between the blades of scimitars fastened to the trappings.[1] In my youth the Prince of Sulmone, at Naples, while disciplining an untrained horse with all sorts of disciplines, held reals [2] under his knees and under his toes as if they were nailed there, (*c*) to show the firmness of his seat.

CHAPTER XLIX

OF ANCIENT CUSTOMS

"I PROPOSE to put together here some ancient customs which I remember, some like our own and others different, to the end that, having in our minds this continual variation of human things, we may have a more enlightened and stable judgement concerning them."

Thus Montaigne describes the subject and object of this Essay. In execution the subject does not prove particularly interesting, nor the object very vigorously or effectively enforced. As with most of these pseudo-historical studies of Montaigne's, the facts are too disconnected, too little strung on thought; they gain no value by being brought together.

There is much animated good sense in his remarks: as when, in his opening paragraph, he ridicules his countrymen for the changeableness

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[1] See G. Lebelski, *Description of the games and magnificent spectacles at Constantinople on the occasion of the circumcision of the son of Amurath.* In Latin; French translation published in 1583.

[2] A Spanish sixpence.

of their fancies in the fashions of dress. The customs he speaks of are, first, the habit of the Romans, which still existed in his day in France, of fighting with the sword while wrapped in a short cloak; and the also still existent old-time French custom of stopping passers-by; the ancient custom of bathing, in connection with which he speaks of the then prevailing fashion among French women of having the hair of the forehead plucked out. He speaks of the ancient custom of eating in a recumbent position, of the custom of kissing one's own hands as a sign of respect, and of the habit of the Venetians of kissing one another on meeting. Elsewhere (Book III, chapter 5) Montaigne says that "the form of salutation which is peculiar to our nation changes by its facility the quality of the charm of kisses" — which, taken with this passage, would seem to imply that in France at that time the kiss of salutation passed between men and women but not between men. He is interested in the custom of the ancients of cooling their wine with snow, and of having their meats served on chafing-dishes; and about "portable kitchens," such as he had himself seen.

He discourses of the fish-pools of the ancients; and asserts that modern men are not capable of rivalling those of old in luxury and magnificence any more than in their virtues — "souls, in proportion as they are less strong, have less means to do either very well or very ill." Then he remarks on the most honourable place at table among the Romans being the middle; and of their paying no attention to whether they named themselves before or after those to whom they spoke or wrote. Then he goes back to their baths, and says that men and women were there together. Then he gives a jump and lands among the ancient Gauls, whose mode of wearing their hair was of the "fashion that has been revived by the effeminate and foolish usage of this age," that is, long in front and short behind. Back to the Romans again, and how they paid their watermen on embarking, "which we do after we have reached the landing." Then the manner in which they lay in the bed, and the manner in which they drank; and how their lackeys looked; and how the ladies of Argos and Rome wore white for mourning, "as ours were wont to do, and as they should continue to do, if my advice were followed."

And the next sentence is the last — and we are not sorry.

I SHOULD readily excuse in our people the having no other pattern and rule of perfection than their own manners and customs; for it is a common fault, not of the vulgar only, but of almost all men, to aim at and abide in the manner of life to which they are born. I am willing that, when they see Fabritius or Lælius, they shall deem their appearance or bearing barbarous, because they are neither dressed nor bred according

to our fashion.[1] But I complain of their special lack of discernment in allowing themselves to be so cheated and blinded by the authority of present usage, that they are capable of changing their opinions and judgements every month, if custom so pleases, and that they form such diverse judgements about themselves. When they wore the busk of the doublet between the breasts, they maintained by vigorous arguments that it was in its proper place. Some years later, lo, it has dropped down to between the thighs; they jeer at the former fashion, declare it unbecoming and unbearable. The present style of dressing makes them incontinently condemn the earlier style, with so great a determination and so universal an accord, that you would say that it is some sort of mania that turns their understanding about. Because our changing is so sudden and so swift in this respect, that the inventive powers of all the tailors in the world could not supply enough novelties, it is inevitable that the despised styles should often come again into fashion, and the others themselves soon after fall into disrepute; and that the same judgement may, in the course of fifteen or twenty years, adopt two or three, not simply different, but quite contrary, opinions with an incredible inconsistency and fickleness. (*c*) There is no one of us so keen of wit that he does not allow himself to be fooled by this contradiction, and his inner as well as his outer eyes to be unconsciously dazzled. (*a*) I propose to put together here some ancient customs which I remember, some like our own and others different, to the end that, having in our minds this continual variation of human things, we may have a more enlightened and stable judgement concerning them.

What we call fighting with sword and cape was in use among the Romans, according to Cæsar: *Sinistras sagis involvunt, gladiosque distringunt.*[2] And he remarks even then the objectionable habit in our nation of stopping travellers

[1] Cf. chap. 31, *supra*, page 270: *Je ne scay, dit-il* [Pyrrhus], *quels barbares sont ceux-cy* (*car les Grecs appelloyent toutes les nations estrangeres barbares*), *mais la disposition de cette armée que je voy n'est aucunement barbare.*

[2] They wrap their left arms in their capes and draw their swords. — Cæsar, *De Bello Civili*, I, 75.

whom we meet on the way, and forcing them to tell us who they are, and taking it as an insult and cause of quarrel if they refuse to answer us.[1]

In their baths, which the ancients took every day before meals as regularly as we take water to wash our hands, they washed at first only their arms and legs; but later, and by a custom that lasted for several centuries, and in most of the nations of the world, they washed all over with prepared and perfumed water, so that they put it forward as evidence of great simplicity to wash in pure water.[2] The most delicate and refined perfumed the whole body several times a day.[3] They often had all the hair plucked out, as French women have for some time past taken up the habit of doing on their foreheads, —

Quod pectus, quod crura tibi, quod brachia vellis,[4] —

although they had unguents available for that purpose.

Psilotro nitet, aut arcida latet oblita creta.[5]

They liked to lie in soft beds, and alleged as a proof of endurance their sleeping on mattresses.[6] They ate reclining on couches, almost in the same position as Turks of our day.

Inde thoro pater Æneas sic orsus ab alto.[7]

And they tell of the younger Cato that, after the battle of Pharsalia, mourning for the evil state of public affairs, he always ate sitting up, adopting a more severe course of life.[8] They kissed their own hands to show respect to grandees

[1] See Cæsar, *De Bello Gallico*, IV, 5.2.

[2] See Seneca, *Epistle* 86.

[3] See *Ibid.*

[4] You pluck the hairs from your chest and legs and arms. — Martial, II, 62.1.

[5] Her skin shines with psilotrum [a depilatory unguent] or is hidden by chalk dissolved in vinegar. — Idem, VI, 93.9. In most modern texts the second word is *viret.*

[6] See Seneca, *Epistle* 108.23.

[7] Then from his high couch father Æneas thus began. — Virgil, *Æneid*, II, 2.

[8] See Plutarch, *Life of Cato of Utica.*

and to make much of them; and, among friends, kissed one another on meeting, as the Venetians do;

Gratatusque darem cum dulcibus oscula verbis.[1]

(*c*) And touched the knees in petitioning or saluting a great person. Pasicles le philosophe, frere de Crates, au lieu de porter la main au genou la porta aux genitoires. Celui a qui il s'adressoit l'aiant rudement repousse: "Comment, dit il, cecy n'est il pas vostre aussi bien que les genoux?" [2] (*a*) Ils mangeoyent, comme nous, le fruict a l'issue de la table. Ils se torchoyent le cul (il faut laisser aux femmes cette vaine superstition des parolles) avec une esponge; voila pourquoi *Spongia* est un mot obscœne en Latin; et estoit cette esponge attachee au bout d'un baston, comme tesmoigne l'histoire de celuy qu'on menoit pour estre presenté aux bestes devant le peuple, qui demanda congé d'aller à ses affaires; et, n'ayant autre moyen de se tuer, il se fourra ce baston et esponge dans le gosier et s'en estouffa.[3] Ils essuyovient le catze de laine perfumee, quand ils en avoyent faict.

At tibi nil faciam, sed lota mentula lana.[4]

Il y avoit aux carrefours à Rome des vaisseaux et demy-cuves pour y apprester à pisser aux passans.[5]

Pusi sæpe lacum propter si ac dolia curta
Somno devincti credunt se extollere vestem.[6]

They took a collation between their meals. And in summer there were venders of snow to cool the wine; and there were some persons who used snow in winter, finding the wine not cold enough even then. Men of high rank had their cup-bearers and carvers, and their fools to amuse them. In win-

[1] I should give you kisses with sweet words in congratulation. — Ovid, *De Ponto*, IV, 9.13.

[2] See Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Crates*. It was Crates himself, not his brother, who asked the question.

[3] See Seneca, *Epistle* 70.

[4] Martial, II, 58.11.

[5] See Lambin's Commentary on Lucretius.

[6] Lucretius, IV, 1026. The true reading is *Puri*.

ter they were served with meat on hot stones, which were brought to the table; and they had portable kitchens—(*c*) I have seen some—(*a*) in which all the needed utensils were carried about with them.[1]

> Has vobis epulas habete lauti;
> Nos offendimur ambulante cœna.[2]

And in summer, in their lower rooms, they often had fresh and clear water flow beneath them in open pipes, wherein there was a store of living fish from which the guests selected and caught by hand, to have them cooked, each man as he liked. Fish has always had this prerogative, — as it still has, — that grandees have a hand in the art of dressing it; also, the taste of it is much more exquisite than that of flesh, at least to my thinking. But in every sort of magnificence, of debauchery, and of voluptuous conceits, of effeminacy, and of costliness, verily we do what we can to equal them, for our wills are quite as corrupted as theirs, but our ability can not attain to it; our powers are no more able to overtake them in these vicious qualities than in the virtuous ones; for both are derived from a vigour of mind which was incomparably greater in them than in us; and souls, in proportion as they are less strong, have the less means to do either very well or very ill.

Among them the seat of honour was the middle.[3] The first and last had in writing and speaking no indication of eminence, as is plainly seen by their writings; they will say "Oppius and Cæsar" as readily as "Cæsar and Oppius," and "I and you" or "you and I," indifferently. This is the reason why I noticed some time ago, in the life of Flaminius, in the French Plutarch, a passage where it seems that the author, speaking of the jealousy between the Ætolians and the Romans about the glory of having won a battle which they had gained in common, gives some weight to the fact that in the Greek ballads the Ætolians were named be-

[1] See Seneca, *Epistle* 78.23.

[2] Keep these bouquets for yourselves, O ye sumptuous; these dinners of changing dishes displease me. — Martial, VII, 48.4.

[3] *Le haut bout d'entre eux, c'estoit le milieu.*

fore the Romans, if there is no amphibology in the French words.[1]

The ladies, when in hot baths, received men there, and made use of their men-servants to rub and anoint them.

Inguina succinctus nigra tibi servus aluta
Stat, quoties calidis nuda foveris aquis.[2]

They besprinkled themselves with some sort of powder to keep down their sweat. The ancient Gauls, says Sidonius Apollinaris, wore their hair long in front, and at the back of the head had it clipped[3] — the same fashion that has been revived by the effeminate and foolish usage of this age. The Romans paid what was due to boatmen for passage-money on entering the boat; which we do after we have reached the landing:

Dum as exigitur, dum mula ligatur,
Tota abit hora.[4]

The women lay in bed on the side next the wall: that is why Cæsar was called "spondam Regis Nicomedis."[5]

(*b*) They took breath while drinking. They baptised their wine:[6]

quis puer ocius
Restinguet ardentis falerni
Pocula prætereunte lympha?[7]

And our lackeys, with their independent ways,[8] were there also:

[1] See Plutarch, *Life of Flaminius*. Amyot's words are: *De maniere que es chansons que les Poëtes en feirent, et que le meme peuple chantoit par les villes à la louange de ce faict d'armes, on mettoit tousjours les Ætoliens devant les Romains.*

[2] A slave girt round the hips with a black leather apron stands near you when, naked, you bathe in warm water. — Martial, VII, 35.2.

[3] See Sidonius Apollinaris, V, 239.

[4] In collecting the passage-money and harnessing the mule, a whole hour passes. — Horace, *Satires*, I, 5.13.

[5] The alcove-side of King Nicomedes. — Suetonius, *Life of Cæsar*.

[6] That is to say, they put water in it.

[7] What slave will quickly cool the cups of fiery Falernian in the neighbouring brook? — Horace, *Odes*, II, 11.18.

[8] *Et ces champisses contenances de nos laquais.*

O Jane, a tergo quem nulla ciconia pinsit,
Nec manus auriculas, imitata est mobilis albas,
Nec linguæ quantum sitiet canis Apula tantum! [1]

The Argive and Roman ladies wore white for mourning,[2] as ours were wont to do, and as they should continue to do, if my advice were followed. (*a*) But whole books have been written on this subject.

[1] O Janus, behind whose back no mocking hand imitates a stork's bill or the white ears [of an ass], no tongue is thrust out as far as that of a thirsty Apulian dog! — Persius, *Satires*, I, 58.

[2] See Plutarch, *Roman Questions*, XXVI.

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